Week ending November 19 1949
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John Bull

LABOUR'S FRONT LINE
by VIRGINIA COWLES
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[NCT 67H]

EDITORIAL

Recruit more nurses and save these lives

"DIED AWAITING ADMISSION to hospital" is a sad epitaph, and, unhappily, it is one that could be applied to hundreds of sick people in Britain today.

About 400 sufferers from tuberculosis die every week—many of them needlessly. And there are always around 7,000 tuberculous people waiting to get into the hospitals where alone they could get the life-saving treatment they require, and cease to endanger others by spreading the disease. Comparatively few can be saved in time.

So tuberculosis and other deadly diseases continue to take a terrible toll of life and happiness.

Why is this allowed to go on? Only because, although this country has half a million hospital beds, one tenth of them are empty and useless without nurses. In addition, 5,000 beds are still unstaffed in sanatoria.

HOSPITAL nursing staffs number about 170,000. At least another 40,000 are needed. Until those recruits come forward, submit to training, and decide to remain in the nursing profession, many more patients are going to die who could easily have been saved.

In the first year of the National Health Service, 13,000 extra nurses were found, and 7,000 beds reopened. It was a start, but no more than a start. The daily, weekly, yearly tragedy that still persists shows that far more needs to be done.

The Ministry of Health admits that the need is desperate, and that the waste of life can be checked only by much more successful recruiting to the nursing profession.

The present recruiting figures, although they do show improvement, move upwards far too slowly. Full-time nurses of all grades have increased since 1947 only by 10,500, and student nurses by just over 5,000. Although part-time workers, now numbering nearly 23,000, have doubled, the hard core of the nursing profession remains far too small.

The hospitals must continue to say "No — not yet" to patients they would like to admit at once. And instead of vigorous help with their staff problem they have received only instructions to cut down expenditure, with the rather puzzling proviso that they must not deny service to anyone who needs it.

While most people sympathize with Health Minister Bevan's difficulties, largely caused by the fact that the tremendous public demand on the Health Service has boosted its cost when economy cuts are the national rule, it may well be thought that his hospital policy needs examining.

If lives are being lost because hospital beds stand empty, then surely Mr. Bevan's first job must be to reopen those beds—even if he has to cut expenses elsewhere?

Nurses remain scarce and new entrants are reluctant mainly because their pay and conditions, in spite of postwar improvements, still do not compete in attractiveness with those offered by other occupations.

The extra nurses already recruited are believed to have been attracted by the improvements organized by the Whitley Council for the profession, which began its work in 1948.

Nurses were given a higher status and a new system of payment, which increased their self-respect. Instead of being paid a minimum wage plus free board, uniform and laundry, they now get a full wage out of which they pay back these charges. The wage is £200 in the first year, £210 in the second and £225 in the third.

A start has also been made with the improvement of living conditions by smarter uniforms, brighter rest rooms and canteens, homelier living quarters and less irksome discipline. The recruiting figures show us that the effect of these concessions, though encouraging, has not been big enough. So, obviously, more must be done—and done quickly.

STUDY what nurses complain about, and you at once find hard reasons why more recruits do not come to the hospitals. The girls resent petty persecution by ward sisters and matrons, obsolete rules, overlong hours, interference with off-duty time, morning lectures following directly on night duty, and lack of definite study periods.

There is still a strong feeling about the amount of purely domestic work which some nurses are called upon to do as well as, or even instead of, their own skilled craft.

These complaints must be met, and the fact that they are being met should be widely publicised. Such measures as the new Nurses' Act, which has passed through Parliament this year, are long-term ones; they do nothing to improve the details of working conditions immediately.

That is the crux of this problem. It is even more important than money. Higher wages, for nurses as for everybody else, may well have to await greater national prosperity. There is all the more reason to get busy forthwith on a fresh overhaul of hospital conditions, so as to get the additional nurses, open the beds and save the lives we are now wasting.

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Free Speech

WHO WANTS TIME-AND-A-HALF?

YOUR EDITORIAL "A Reply to the Man Who Wants More Money" (JOHN BULL, October 29) raises an important point. My experience makes me wonder whether overtime payments are really much inducement to greater efforts.

The people who work overtime most in the factory where I am employed are those who get paid nothing for the extra work. Recently, a man arrived at the office at four o'clock in the morning to see how a particularly important test he had left running was getting on. He had been married the previous day.

I am constantly amazed at the number of people who work on Sunday mornings yet get not a penny for doing so. It is purely a question of keenness. Personally, I am far from convinced that double payment or time-and-a-half does much towards increasing production.—TIMEKEEPER, Hampshire.

Wilfred's Guiding Star

READING Wilfred Pickles's life story in JOHN BULL, I am struck by the enormous help his wife has been to him. To encourage a man to attain his ambition, to console him in failure, to fire him with enthusiasm, to walk step by step with him all the way—surely this is the great quality of wifehood. To me, Mabel is the perfect wife.—MISS W. P., Lanarkshire.

"Perfect wife"

. . . Mabel, without question, has been Wilfred's guiding star. You can see it in every part of his stimulating story.—MISS SADIE COATSWORTH, 48 Harnelton Road, Dover.

. . . Thank you for publishing his life story, which is by far the best I have ever read. It is like talking to someone who understands the hard ways of life.—MRS. ELIZABETH TURNER, 32 Spring Gardens, Spalding, Lincs.

Voice Deserts Her

OCCASIONALLY, as secretary of a club, I have to make a speech. Sitting down I find this easy, but if I have to stand my voice deserts me and I cannot think of a thing to say. Does anyone know of a cure?—MISS JOYCE CORLETT, 8 Colville Square, London, W.11.

Ex-miner On Absenteeism

AS A FORMER MINER, I am convinced that there are thousands of men in the pits who are physically not up to the task. I left school one day and was down the mine the next. For twenty years it was a fight against physical handicaps, which I knew I was losing. Every day off work meant my wife and children going without something essential.

In the end I had a serious breakdown and was off work for eighteen months. The doctor said I should never have been down a mine at all. But when I recovered there was nothing else I could do but go back to the pit.

A second breakdown came and I now have a job I can do. I have not had a day off either for illness or idleness in six years. I know there are thousands in the pits today having the same struggle as I had, and people should know these things when they talk about absenteeism.—EX-MINER, Nottingham.

Nobody's Pal

FEELING IN A HAPPY MOOD, I left the ship that had brought me home after fourteen months in Canada. Cheerfully I approached a man with a peaked cap and said, "Excuse me, pal, could you tell me which room my baggage would be in?"

With his eyes looking skywards, he said, "I am a customs officer and I am pal to nobody."—J. H. S., Liverpool.

By Invitation Only

TWO MEN called at my home and asked if we had a radio licence. When I said we had not, they asked to see the set. I protested, and the senior produced an authority card.

But have radio detectives the right to enter a house without the owner's permission? — HOUSEHOLDER, Minchinhampton, Glos.

No, says the Post Office. Radio detectives only enter a house when invited.—EDITOR.

Without Prejudice

I HAVE JUST HAD A delightful surprise—an air letter from Chicago from someone who read my letter "Effect of a Smile" ("Free Speech," August 6). The writer offered to send me magazines and books and at the end she said: "I have heard that the British are fine people without prejudice. I am coloured."

I cannot tell you how deeply this last piece touched me.—MRS. ELIZABETH LAMBERT, 42 Firs Drive, Cranford, Middx.

Anti-cat Defences

VISITS FROM CATS OF the neighbourhood used to plague me night and day. But since I painted the tops of the backyard walls with black lacquer they have all disappeared. It seems that none of them will go near it.—G. WITHINGTON, 79 Franklin Street, Salford, Lancs.

Bartered Brides

DOES DENNIS HOLMAN, who wrote "They Barter for Their Brides" (JOHN BULL, October 22), expect Englishmen to swallow such tommy rot? I am an Irishman and have travelled North and South, yet never once have I come in contact with a bartered bride.—DAVID HAMILL, Hillcrest, Markethill, Co. Armagh.

. . . Three years ago, while on holiday in the West of Ireland, I met a bartered bride. She met her husband for the first time on a Monday and was married the following Saturday. She was an old woman, nearing seventy, and although the marriage had been a happy one she was glad her daughters were not traded in this way.—PATRICK MCEWAN, 25b Duff Crescent, Stirling.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter.

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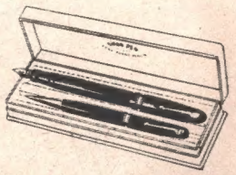

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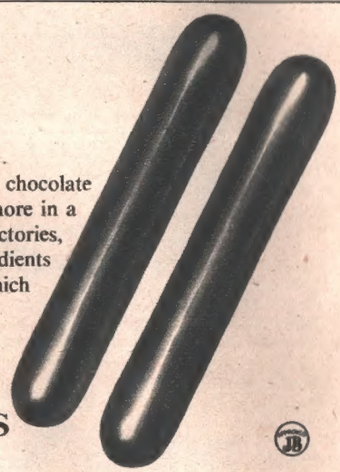

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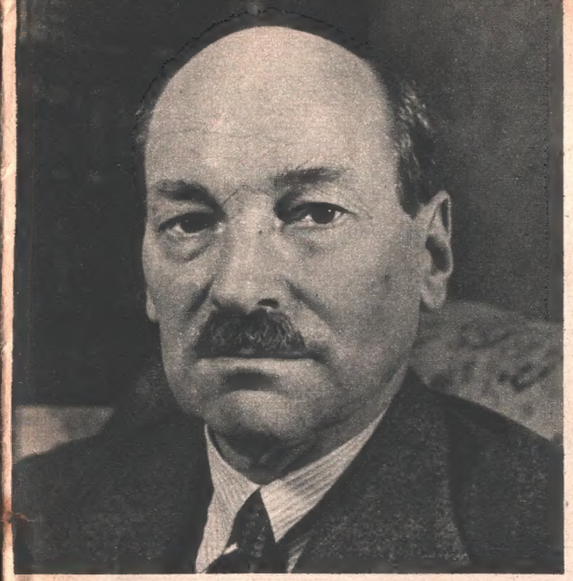

ATTLEE: "Far from a pedestrian type. With terrier-like insistence he has impressed his ideas on an unwieldy party"

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LABOUR'S FRONT LINE

by VIRGINIA COWLES

A distinguished observer gives a frank close-up of the men who will lead the Government's election campaign

SHORTLY after the 1945 election a Conservative remarked mischievously: "Attlee is called the Prime Minister, Morrison thinks he is the Prime Minister, and Bevin *is* the Prime Minister." Since that time Sir Stafford Cripps has become a contender and Aneurin Bevan a runner-up.

These five men are the most powerful members of the Government; they are almost equally well known throughout the country and almost equally experienced in assuming heavy responsibility.

In the eyes of the public each has qualities which overshadow the others. Attlee is most respected for his character, Cripps for his brain, Morrison for his organizing ability, Bevin for his force and Bevan for his oratorical brilliance. If you rolled all five into one you would have the statesman for whom the world has been searching for a long, long time.

Of them all, Clement Attlee is the least dramatic. He is noted for two things: his integrity and his shyness. It is seldom that the meek inherit the earth. Virtue is not a vote catcher and as a chief characteristic rarely takes a man to the highest office in the land. How then, did a man as retiring as Mr. Attlee become Prime Minister?

Clement Attlee was born sixty-six years ago of well-to-do, middle-class parents who lived in the London suburb of Putney. He was one of seven children. His father, a solicitor, was a Gladstonian Liberal and his mother a Conservative. He was educated at Haileybury and at University College, Oxford. Politics did not concern him much; he accepted as a matter of course the atmosphere in which he lived.

> I was a . . . Conservative (he wrote). The violent non-conformist made no appeal. . . . I thought then that quite definitely only gentlemen were fit to govern. . . . The well-to-do were, for the most part, what they were because of their virtue. . . .

A turning point came in his life when he was twenty-four years old. He made an excursion with his brother Tom to the East End of London to inspect Haileybury House, a boys' settlement run by his own school, "to see," as he put it, "how our money was being spent."

It was a raw, foggy night and the mean streets of Limehouse looked even meaner in the dim, flickering lights. He had never seen a world of poverty before and was deeply impressed. Although he had begun a career at the Bar he had not been particularly successful in attracting clients, and when the club manager asked him if he would give up some of his spare time to help with the boys he agreed to do so.

Soon he was a frequent visitor, and two years later when the manager retired stepped into his shoes.

For the next fifteen years, except for the interlude of the first World War, in which he began as a private and ended as a major, Attlee lived in the East End. His settlement work led to Socialism, his Socialism to the street-corner soapbox, and the soapbox to Parliament. For twenty-nine years he has sat as the Member for Limehouse.

The 1931 Debacle

Some claim that chance alone made him leader of his Party; others that it was the natural reward for years of hard work in his constituency. This was what happened: In 1931 the Labour Party suffered a severe defeat; only fifty-one Socialists and over 500 Conservatives were returned to Parliament. Almost all the prominent Labour leaders lost their seats, among them Morrison, Dalton, Greenwood, Alexander and Clynes.

The only three who survived were Lansbury, who became leader of the Party, Attlee and Stafford Cripps. As Cripps had only held legal office and was too aloof to be popular, Attlee was chosen deputy leader.

In 1935, Lansbury resigned and recommended that Attlee take his place until after the General Election, which was due at the end of the year. "Clem is well able to handle anything that comes

CRIPPS: "Brainiest, most eccentric member of Cabinet. Colleagues respect his capacity, but find him rather exacting"

BEVAN: "Scathing tongue makes Tories hate him. Since he's ten years younger than other leaders, some say he'll be P.M."

up," he insisted. Many newspapers, however, were caustic. The *Daily Mail* commented on the similarity of Attlee's head to that of Lenin and wrote patronizingly: "So the Leader of the Socialist Opposition is to be Major Attlee. I am afraid that he will not be so for long, but he deserves the success that is his momentarily."

The 1935 election brought 154 Socialists into the House. The Party met to vote for a permanent leader. The names of Attlee, Morrison and Greenwood were put forward. Attlee polled the highest, Morrison second and Greenwood, supported largely by trade unionists, third. Greenwood dropped out and a second ballot was taken. Attlee's four years as deputy leader weighed in his favour. Greenwood's supporters went solidly over to him.

Certainly it would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between two Prime Ministers than Churchill and Attlee. Churchill revelled in his position; he loved power and recognition and squeezed every ounce of drama out of a dramatic five years.

Attlee, on the other hand, gives one the impression of performing a duty; and in any given situation he may be relied upon to drain away whatever drama exists. When he served as deputy leader under Churchill during the war, a Cabinet colleague commented: "When Winston presides at a Cabinet we feel we are in the presence of history; the monologue goes on for hours and we come away as from a feast. When Attlee takes the chair it is a business meeting, and we get home for dinner."

It is an interesting fact that as children these two men had the same governess. A certain Miss Hutchinson left Lord Randolph Churchill's household to go to the Attlees. She has described Winston as "an extremely self-willed boy," but her opinion of Clement has never been recorded. According to Attlee himself, however, shyness was always a major characteristic. Nearly thirty years of public life have done little to minimize it.

His embarrassment is contagious, and as a result many men who have great personal regard for him will go a long way to avoid having a conversation with him. Only when he is among a few people he knows well and with whom he can discuss cricket, Army experiences or the early days of the Labour Movement does he seem wholly at ease. Then he has an inexhaustible supply of anecdotes and can be really witty.

Guest Who Was Late

Perhaps because he has suffered so much from shyness himself he is hypersensitive to the feelings of others. Once when he was giving a large dinner at 10 Downing Street, the seventeen-year-old schoolmate of one of his daughters was late in arriving. No one noticed her absence until the guests were seated and there was an empty chair. Attlee at once insisted that everyone fold his napkin, return to the drawing-room and take up his cocktail glass as though nothing had happened. The girl soon appeared and never knew what she had been spared.

Attlee as Prime Minister, however, is very different from the Attlee one sees at social occasions. At Cabinet meetings his meekness drops away and he becomes a martinet, rapping on the table and keeping order in a sharp, waspish way. And his sting can be dangerous, for when he feels it necessary to dismiss a member of the Government he does so ruthlessly.

In England it has always been an unwritten law that you "kick a Minister upstairs" by sending him to the Lords or perhaps deporting him to a Colony as a Governor. But Attlee has not bothered with this sort of appeasement; he has dropped both Ministers and Junior Ministers alike and given them no alternative but a seat on the back benches.

Altogether, Attlee is far from a pedestrian character. When the century can be reviewed as a whole it may well prove that he has affected the history of the nation as decisively as Winston Churchill. With almost terrier-like insistence he has impressed his ideas of social democracy on a huge, unwieldy Party that originally represented every shade of opinion.

First and foremost he is a democrat. At all times he has refused to compromise with the extreme Left. He has packed the junior offices of the Government with moderates, for these are the men who will carry on the brand of Socialism in which he believes.

Morrison–Bevin "Feud"

As everyone knows, Herbert Morrison and Ernest Bevin do not like each other. A feud has been smouldering between them for nearly twenty years, which is supposed to have its roots in a clash of authority between Morrison, the Labour Party organizer, and Bevin, the trade union leader. Added to this, their personalities are naturally antagonistic, possibly because they have too much in common. Both are the sons of working-class men, both have struggled against poverty, both are on the Right Wing of the Socialist Movement, and both like power. Both are forceful, dictatorial and supremely egotistical.

However, a sign that the breach between them might be narrowing came in 1947 when Bevin went to America and a group of Labour back benchers staged a "revolt" against his foreign policy. Herbert Morrison, as Leader of the House, squashed the insurrection quickly and decisively. When Ernest returned to London the first words of praise he had ever uttered for Morrison fell from his lips—"'Erbert played the game."

Herbert Morrison is a short, square Cockney with one eye, a lock of hair that curls over his forehead, and a face full of pugnacious humour. He is fond of referring to his "Tory background," for his father, a policeman, was a die-hard Conservative. So much so that when Herbert began talking Socialism at the age of fourteen and Left Wing pamphlets started arriving in the mail for him, his father tore them up and Herbert left home.

He had a series of jobs as a grocer's errand boy, a shop assistant, a window dresser and a telephone operator. When he was twenty-seven years old he became the secretary of the London Labour Party at a salary of a pound a week. This was the beginning of his political career.

As Leader of the House of Commons, Morrison runs the Parliamentary Labour Party. He decides what business will be taken up, how much time will be given to debates and what tactics are to be adopted. He will direct the tactics of the General Election. He believes that if Socialism is to survive it must capture the support of the middle classes, and all his speeches are carefully framed to this end. When someone like Shinwell announces that he doesn't give a "tinker's cuss" for anyone except the workers, or Aneurin Bevan declares that Tories are "lower than vermin," Morrison's anger reaches boiling point.

Morrison's views on nationalisation are regarded with impatience by many of his colleagues. He believes in "going slow." He sees nationalisation not as a means of breaking the power of the capitalists, as some of his Party do, but of increasing efficiency. "I don't want to socialize for the mere sake of socializing," he insists. "That wouldn't be sense. I want to socialize where it is good public business to do so." His worship of efficiency makes him one of the few Socialists who are not afraid to praise the wartime Minister of Aircraft Production—that high priest of Empire, Lord Beaverbrook. He also shows a magnanimity towards Churchill which the latter finds hard to reciprocate.

Every Thursday in the Commons, Winston, as Leader of the Opposition, calls for a statement of the following week's business, phrasing his words in a slightly different way each time for the amusement of his colleagues. Herbert, as Leader of the House, always replies to him, and then the fun begins. As masters of sarcasm they are well matched. Insults couched in stylish Parliamentary language are hurled back and forth, Churchill as savage as a bulldog and Morrison as agile as a monkey.

During the war Churchill made full use of Morrison's ability, inviting him to sit as a member of the War Cabinet; and in 1943 he remarked: "We derive the greatest advantage from Mr. Morrison's counsels, and I hope we shall continue to do so for long."

However, when Morrison became instrumental in pressing for a General Election and breaking up Churchill's coalition, Winston became as piqued as a small boy. He said that of all his colleagues the one he was most glad to see the back of was Morrison.

Morrison is five years younger than Attlee, but he has the same birthday; perhaps astrologers can see something significant in this.

A Foreign Office Flap

Someone once remarked about Ernest Bevin: "He murders the English language, but mirrors the souls of millions of English people." When this large, lumbering trade union leader with a face as rugged as an Epstein sculpture was made Foreign Secretary in 1945, he went to Potsdam and inquired sharply of the civil servants present: "What is going to be done about S?" A note was circulated through the Foreign Office: "What about S?" "And who the hell is S?" expostulated an official in exasperation. The mystery was finally solved: Bevin was referring to Rudolf Hess.

The early life of Ernest Bevin might have been drawn from the pages of Charles Dickens. His father was a Somerset farm labourer who died before Ernest was born, and his mother was a village midwife. At the age of six he was an orphan and at eleven was sent to work on a farm where he toiled from dawn to dusk for his keep and sixpence a week.

Two years later he ran away with nothing more than the clothes on his back to seek his fortune in the great port of Bristol. There were many men out of work in those days and the next few years were a hard, bitter struggle.

Bevin got a job as dishwasher at a shilling a day, as a waiter and, later, as the driver of a horse and wagon for a maker of mineral waters. For years he lived on fifteen shillings a week; he married on a pound a week, and never earned over two pounds a week until he was twenty-nine.

His fabulous career as a trade union leader began with his job as a van driver. His deliveries took him to the docks, where the unemployed lined up for work in the early morning light and often waited half the day before returning home empty-handed. He soon began addressing meetings and agitating on their behalf for "the right to work."

He joined the union as a member of the carmen's branch and before long became its chairman. In 1920 he won important wage concessions for the dockers in a public court of inquiry, earning for himself the name of "the dockers' K.C." But his great work as a trade unionist was in amalgamating thirty-seven unions into one giant organization, the Transport and General Workers' Union, which today is the largest single union in the world, with a membership of over 1,300,000.

When Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940, Bevin was one of the first people for whom he sent. This was a dramatic move, for these two men were pitted against each other as bitter opponents when Bevin was one of the leaders of the General Strike in 1926. But Winston needed a man of unusual ability, and although Bevin was in his sixtieth year with no political experience, he persuaded him to enter Parliament and become his Minister of Labour.

Sure He Knows Best

Bevin's rise from obscurity and his powerful grip on three decades of history are due chiefly to an immense personality and an almost devastating conviction that he knows best. These two qualities stand out so clearly and sharply that one is apt to think of him as a man of simplicity, whereas in truth he is curiously complicated. With little education to draw from, his knowledge of human beings is derived entirely from direct observation. No man is a greater master of the art of bullying and bludgeoning, cajoling and persuading, in the use of first the velvet glove and then the mailed fist. His wiliness makes him a formidable opponent, and anyone who has seen him addressing a conference of many thousands of people cannot fail to be impressed by his technique; often long-winded and boringly repetitious in his opening, he never fails to introduce the sledgehammer blows in the third act that generally succeed in pulverizing his enemies.

In 1935, when the Labour Party was in danger of a serious split due to the fact that its leader, George Lansbury, a saintly old man, was preaching pacifism in the face of the rising tide of Fascism, it was left to Bevin to strip him of

Continued on page 14

INSIDE BUCHMAN'S SHANGRI-LA

AS AN INDEPENDENT OBSERVER, Geoffrey Williamson flew over to Switzerland to see what goes on at the large, palatial mountain headquarters of the Oxford Group at Caux—meeting place of thousands of Dr. Buchman's followers from all over the world.

How does the Group work? What are its resources? Are its Moral Re-Armament claims pretentious? After weeks of investigation, Geoffrey Williamson has written a revealing survey which starts in . . .

John Bull next week

The boy was out walking with his aunt when a car drove up, a man got out, picked him up and pitched him in the back. It was as simple as that

Amateur in Violence

by MICHAEL GILBERT

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKY

He was a business man, respectable, law-abiding, middle-aged. Then a gang of ruthless men kidnapped his child

WE WERE TALKING about violence. "Some people," I said, "are afraid of people and some people are afraid of things."

Chief Inspector Hazlerigg gave this remark more consideration than it seemed to merit and then said: "Illustration, please."

"Well, some people are afraid of black men and some of razors."

"I don't think that sort of fear is a constant," said Hazlerigg. "It changes as you grow older, you know—or get more experienced. I haven't much occasion for bodily violence in my present job." (He was one of the chief inspectors on the cab rank at Scotland Yard.) "When I was a young constable the customers I chiefly disliked were drunken women. Nowadays—well, perhaps I should look at it the other way round. Perhaps I could describe the sort of man whom *I* should hate to have after *me*."

In the pause that followed I tried hard to visualize what precise mixture of thug and entrepreneur would terrify the red-faced, grey-eyed, bulky, equitable man sitting beside me.

"He'd be English," said Hazlerigg at last, "Anglo-Saxon anyway, getting on for middle age and a first-class business man. He would have had some former experience of lethal weapons—as an infantry soldier, perhaps, in one of the world wars. But definitely an amateur—an amateur in violence. He would believe passionately in the justice of what he was doing—but without ever allowing the fanatic to rule the business man. Now that's a type I should hate to have after me. He's unstoppable."

"Is that a portrait from life?" I said.

"Yes," said Hazlerigg slowly. "Yes. It's a portrait from life. It all happened a good time ago—in the early thirties, when I was a junior inspector. Even now, you'll have to be very careful about names, you know, because if the real truth came out—however, judge for yourself."

INSPECTOR HAZLERIGG first met Mr. Collet (*the* Collets, the shipping people—this one was the third of the dynasty) in his managing director's mahogany-lined office. Hazlerigg was there by appointment. He had arrived at the building in a plain van and had been introduced via the goods entrance, but once inside he had been treated with every consideration.

Even during the few minutes which had elapsed before he could be brought face to face with Mr. Collet, Hazlerigg had managed to collect a few impressions. Small things, from the way the commissionaire and the messenger spoke about him, and more still from the way his secretary spoke *to* him: that they liked him and liked working for him; that they knew something was wrong and were sorry about it.

They didn't, of course, know exactly what the trouble was. Hazlerigg did.

Kidnapping—the extorting of money by kidnapping—is a filthy thing. Fortunately, it does not seem to come very easily to the English criminal. But there was a little wave of it that year. It had come across the Atlantic the year before and was at the moment enjoying its short, evil heyday on English soil.

Mr. Collet had an only child, a boy of nine. On the afternoon of the previous day he had been out with his aunt, Mr. Collet's sister, in the park. A car had overtaken them on an empty stretch. A man had got out, pitched the boy into the back of the car, and driven off. As simple as that.

"So far as we know," said Hazlerigg, "there's just the one crowd. I'll be quite frank. We know very little about them. But there have been four cases already, and the features have been too much alike for coincidence."

"Such as—?" said Mr. Collet. His voice and his hands, Hazlerigg noticed, were under control. He couldn't see the eyes. Mr. Collet was wearing heavy sunglasses.

"Well—they don't ask for too much to start with, that's one thing. The first demand has always been quite modest. The idea being that a man will be more likely to go on paying once he has started."

"Right so far," said Mr. Collet. "They asked for five thousand. They could have had it this morning—if I'd thought it would do any good."

"Then there's also their method of

Outside, the three men crept forward with their guns, ready for the jump. And inside, Collet was ready, too

collecting. It's disarming. They employ known crooks. I don't know what they pay them—just enough to make it worth their while to take the risk. These crooks are strictly carriers only. We could arrest them at the moment they contact you without getting any nearer to the real organizers."

"The Piccadilly side of Green Park, at two o'clock tomorrow," said Mr. Collet. "I got the rendezvous quite openly over the telephone. Could they be followed?"

"That's where the organization really starts," said Hazlerigg. "Every move after that is worked out—and when you come to think about it the cards are very heavily stacked in their favour. All they've got to do is to hand the money on. There are a hundred ways of doing it. They might pass it over in a crowd in an underground train or a bus in the rush hour, or they might be picked up by car and driven somewhere fast, or they might hand it over in a cinema. They might get rid of the money the same day, or they might wait a week."

"Yes," said Mr. Collet, "a little organization and that part shouldn't be too difficult. Any other peculiarities about this crowd?"

He said this as a business man might inquire about a firm with whom he was going to trade.

HAZLERIGG hesitated. What he was going to say had to be said some time. It might as well be said now. And there was something else. The real reason behind his visit.

"Yes, sir," he said. "There's this to consider. However much the victim pays—however often he pays—however promptly he pays—he doesn't get the child back. You've given us the best chance so far by coming to us immediately." Mr. Collet said nothing. "You know Roger Calumy—he lost his little girl—Zilla was her name. He paid nine times. More than a hundred thousand pounds—until he had no more left and said so. Next morning they found Zilla; in the swill bin at the back of his house."

There was another silence. Hazlerigg saw the whites of the knucklebones start up for a moment on one of Mr. Collet's thin brown hands. At last he got to his feet and said: "Thank you, Inspector. I have your contact number. I'll get hold of you as soon as I—as soon as anything happens."

As he walked to the door he took off his glasses for the first time and Hazlerigg saw in his eyes that he had got his ally. It had been a risk, but it had come off.

Mr. Collet was going to fight.

When the door had closed behind the chief inspector Mr. Collet thought for a few moments and then rang the bell and asked for Mr. Stevens.

Mr. Stevens, who was a month or two short of fifteen, was the head of the Collet messenger service, and a perfectly natural gangster.

He spent a good deal of his time (time that Mr. Collet paid for) in organizing the messenger boys of the firm into a mixture of trade union, closed shop and gang which would have done no discredit to Capone at his peak. He had already engineered two beautifully timed strikes, the second of which had called for Mr. Collet's personal intervention.

It says a good deal for both parties that when Mr. Collet sent for him and asked for his help, young Stevens listened carefully to what he had to say and promised him the fullest assistance of himself and his organization. His promises, indeed, went further than Mr. Collet's demands.

"No film stuff," said Mr. Collet. "These men are real crooks. They're dangerous. And they're wide awake. They expect to be followed. We're going to do this on business lines."

THAT was Wednesday. At four o'clock on Thursday afternoon Inspector Hazlerigg again visited Archangel Street, taking the same precautions. Mr. Collet was at his desk. "You've got something for me. . . ." It was more a statement than a question. There was something in Mr. Collet's eyes which had not been there before.

"Before I answer that," said Mr. Collet, "I want something from you. I want your promise that you won't act on my information without my permission."

"I'm a police officer," said Hazlerigg. "I cannot—"

"Then I shall tell you nothing," said Collet.

He meant it, too.

Hazlerigg said: "All right. I can't promise not to go on with such steps as I'm already taking. But I promise not to use your information until you say so. What do you know?"

"I know the names of most of the men concerned," said Mr. Collet. "I know where my son is—I know where these people are hiding."

When Hazlerigg had recovered his breath he said: "Perhaps you'll explain."

"I thought a good deal," said Mr. Collet, "about what you told me—about the sort of people we were dealing with. Particularly about the men who would contact me and carry back the money. It was obvious that they weren't afraid of violence. They weren't even, basically, afraid of being arrested. That was part of the risk. They certainly weren't open to any sort of persuasion. If they observed the routine, which had no doubt been carefully laid down for them, they would take the money from me and get it back to their employers, without giving us any chance of following them. Their position seemed to be pretty well impregnable. In the circumstances it seemed—do you play bridge, Inspector?"

"Badly," said Hazlerigg. "But I'm very fond of it."

"Then you understand the Vienna Coup."

"In theory—though I could never work it. It's a sort of squeeze. You start by playing away one of your winning aces, isn't that it?"

"Exactly," said Mr. Collet. "You give—or appear to give—your opponents an unexpected gift. And like all unexpected gifts it throws them off balance and upsets their defence. I decided to do the same. To be precise I gave them five thousand pounds more than they asked for."

"You—"

"Just that. I met these men—there were two of them as I told you—by appointment in Green Park. I simply opened my briefcase and put a brown

paper packet into their hands. They opened it quickly, and as they were doing so I said: 'Ten thousand pounds in one pound notes—that's right isn't it?' I could almost see it hit them. To give them time to cover up I said: 'When do I see my boy?' The elder of the two men said: 'You'll be seeing him soon. We'll ring you tomorrow.' Then they pushed off. I could see them starting to argue as they went."

Mr. Collet paused. Inspector Hazlerigg, who was still trying to work out the angles, said nothing.

"The way I figured it out," said Mr. Collet, "they'd have all their plans made for handing on five thousand pounds to their employers. So I gave them ten thousand. That meant five thousand for themselves if they kept quiet about it, and played it right. But I'd put all the notes in one packet, you see. They had to be divided out. Then they had to split the five thousand again among themselves — they were both in on it. Above all they had to get somewhere safe and somewhere quiet and talk it out. You see what that meant. Their original plan—the careful one laid down for them by the bosses—had to be scrapped.

"They had to make another plan, and make it rather quickly. It would be something simple. They'd either go to one of their own houses, or a safe friend's house—and it would probably be somewhere with a telephone—because they'd have to invent some sort of story for the bosses to explain why they'd abandoned the original plan. That last bit was only surmise, but it was a fair business risk."

"Yes," said Hazlerigg. I see. You still had to follow them, though."

"Not me," said Mr. Collet. "It was the boys who did that. The streets round the park were full of them. They're a sort of car watching club—you see them anywhere in the streets of London if you look. They collect car numbers. Boy of mine called Stevens ran it. He's a born organizer. I went straight back to the office. Fifteen minutes later I got a call. Just an address, near King's Cross.

"I passed it on to a friend of mine in the post office—he's quite a senior official, so I won't give you his name. Inside five minutes he had the line from that house tapped. He was just in time to collect the outgoing call. That was that. It was to a house in Essex. Here's the address." He pushed a slip of paper across. "That's the name of the people."

"Just like that," said Hazlerigg. "Simple. Scotland Yard have been trying to do it for six months."

"I had more at stake than you," said Mr. Collet.

"Yes," said Hazlerigg. "What happens now?"

"Now," said Mr. Collet, "We sit back and wait."

CONTINUING the story, Hazlerigg said to me: "I think that was one of the bravest and coolest things I ever saw a man do. He was quite right, of course. The people we were dealing with were desperate. They moved by instinct—that sort of deadly instinct which those people get who sleep with one finger on the trigger.

"When their messengers reported the change of plan—I don't know what sort of story they put up—their bristles must have been on end. These people can smell when something's wrong. They're so used to double-crossing other people that they get a sort of second sight about it themselves. If we'd rushed them then, we should never have got the boy alive. So we waited. We had a man watch the house—it was a big, rather lonely house, between Pitsea and Rayleigh on the north of the Thames where the foothills run up from Benfleet."

And, meanwhile, Mr. Collet sat in his mahogany-lined office and transacted the business of his firm. On the fourth morning he got a letter, in a painstaking schoolboy script.

Dear Father,

I am to write this to you. You are to pay five thousand pounds more. They will telephone you how to pay. I am quite well. It is quite a nice house. It is quite a nice room. The sun wakes me in the early morning. *Love from David.*

P.S. Please be quick.

MR. ANDREWS, senior partner in the firm of Andrews and Mackay, house agents of Pitsea, summed up his visitor at one glance which took in the silk tie, the pigskin briefcase, and the bonnet of the chauffeur-driven Daimler standing outside the office, and said in his most deferential voice: "Certainly, Mr.—er—Robinson. Anything we can do to help you. It's not everybody's idea of a house, but if you're looking for something quiet and secluded—a house of character—"

"I understand that it's occupied at the moment," said Mr. Robinson.

"Temporarily," agreed Mr. Andrews. "But you could have possession. The owner" (who had long ago despaired of selling it, though Mr. Andrews naturally refrained from saying so) "let it on very short notice to a syndicate of men who are interested in a colour process. They needed the big grounds—the quiet, you understand, and the freedom from interruption. The only difficulty which occurs to me is that you will not be able to inspect the house today. By the terms of our arrangement we have to give at least forty-eight hours' notice."

Mr. Robinson thought for a moment and then said: "Have you such a thing as a plan of the house?"

"Why certainly," said Mr. Andrews. "We had a very careful survey made when the house was put up for sale. Here you are—on two floors only, you see. There's the very large entrance hall with a good sweep of stair."

"Only one bedroom," said Mr. Robinson, "looks due east?"

"Why, yes." Mr. Andrews was hardened to the vagaries of clients. "Most of the bedrooms, of course, have the southern aspect."

"The sun wakes me in the early morning," said Mr. Robinson softly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Robinson. "Nothing. Thinking aloud. A bad habit. Would it be asking too much if I borrowed these plans for a day?"

"Why, of course," said Mr. Andrews. "Keep them for as long as you like."

FOUR o'clock of a perfect summer afternoon. It was so silent that the clack of a scythe blade on a stone sounded clear across the valley where the big grey house dozed in the sun. The tails of the cows moved. Nothing else. The shadows slowly lengthened.

As the double chime of the half hour sounded from Rayleigh Church a figure appeared on the dusty road. It was a man, in postman's uniform, wheeling a bicycle.

The woman in the lodge answered the bell and unlocked one of the big gates, without comment. Then she returned to her back room, picked up the house telephone and said: "All right. It's only the postman."

It was a mistake which might have cost her very dearly.

As Mr. Collet wheeled his borrowed machine slowly up the long drive he was thinking about the bulky sack which rested on the saddle and balanced there with difficulty. He knew that some very sharp eyes would be watching his approach. It couldn't be helped though. He had been able to see no better method of getting this particular apparatus up to the house.

He propped his bicycle against the pillar of the front door, lifted the sack down, keeping the mouth of it gathered in his left hand, and rang the bell.

So far, so good.

The door was opened by a man in corduroys and a tweed jacket. He might have been a gardener or a gamekeeper. Mr. Collet, looking at his eyes, knew better.

"Don't shout," he said. The gun in his hand was an argument.

For a moment the man stared. Then he jumped to one side and started to open his mouth.

Even for an indifferent shot three yards is not a long range. The big bullet lifted the man back on to his heels like a punch under the heart and crumpled him on to the floor.

In the deep silence which followed the roar of the gun Mr. Collet raced for the stairs. The heavy sack was against him but he made good time.

At the top he turned left with the sureness of a man who knows his mind and made for the room at the end of the corridor.

He saw that it was padlocked.

He put the muzzle of his gun as near to the padlock as he dared and pulled the trigger.

The jump of the gun threw the bullet up into the door jamb, missing the padlock altogether. He took a lower aim and tried again. Once, twice, again. The padlock buckled.

Mr. Collet kicked the door open and went in.

The boy was half sitting, half kneeling on his pallet bed in one corner. Mr. Collet grinned at him with a good deal more confidence than he felt and said: "Stand out of the way, son. The curtain's going up for the last act."

As he spoke he was piling together mattresses, bedclothes, a rug and a couple of small chairs into a barricade.

MICHAEL GILBERT, author of *Amateur in Violence*, one of the most gripping stories John Bull has ever published, is a thirty-six year old London solicitor, fast making a name for himself as a writer of crime fiction. For the authentic detail in his stories, he relies on contacts at Scotland Yard, and the Detection Club (rendezvous of top-ranking "who-dunit" writers—secretary, Dorothy L. Sayers), of which he is a member.

He has written four novels, mainly, he says, at weekends—"I find that it's quite impossible to do any work in the evenings with a fourteen-month daughter claiming attention."

When he had done this he opened the sack, pulled out the curious looking instrument from inside it, laid it beside his home-made parapet and started working on it.

"Get into that far corner, son," said Mr. Collet. "And you might keep an eye on the window, just in case it occurs to the gentry to run a ladder up. Keep your head down, though. Here they come."

Although Mo Keller had tortured children, and had killed for pleasure as well as for profit he was not physically a coward.

As he watched his henchman twitching on the hall floor, with the indifference of a man who has seen many men die, he was already working out his plan of attack.

"Take a long ladder," he said to one man, "and run it up to the window. Not the bedroom window—be your age. Put it against the landing window, this end. You can see the bedroom door from there, can't you? If it's shut, wait. If it's open, start shooting into the room—aim high. We'll go in together along the floor."

"He'll pick us off as we come."

"Not if Hoppy keeps him pinned down," said Keller. "Besides I reckon he doesn't know much about guns. It took him four shots to knock off that lock, didn't it? Any more arguments?"

Half a mile away and more at points round the lip of the valley, four police tenders had started up their engines at the sound of the first shot.

Hazlerigg was lying full length on the roof of one of them, a pair of long binoculars in his hands.

The Essex Superintendent looked up at him.

"I made that five shots," he said. "Do we start?"

"No, sir," said Hazlerigg. "You remember the signal we arranged."

"Do you think he can do his stuff?" The Superintendent sounded worried.

"He hasn't done badly so far," said Hazlerigg shortly, and silence settled down once more.

IT was the driver of their car who saw it first, and gave a shout. From one of the first floor windows of the house, unmistakable and ominous, a rolling cloud of black and sooty smoke.

The four cars started forward as one.

In that long upstairs passage things had gone according to plan—at first. Covered by a fusillade from the window, Mo Keller and his two assistants had inched their way forward on elbows and knees, their guns ahead of them.

At the end of the passage stood the door, open and inviting. The outer end of Mr. Collet's barricade came into sight as they advanced, but it was offset from the doorway and Mr. Collet himself was still invisible.

Five yards to go.

Then, as the three men bunched for the final jump, it came out to meet them. A great red and yellow river of flame, overmantled with black smoke, burning and hissing and dripping with oil. As they turned to fly it caught them. . . .

"There was nothing very much for us to do when we did get there," said Inspector Hazlerigg. "We had to get Mr. Collet and David out of the window—the passage floor was red hot. We caught one man in the garden. His nerve was gone—he seemed glad to give himself up.

"As for the other three—an infantry flame-thrower is not a discriminating sort of weapon, particularly at close quarters. There was just about enough left of them—well—say just about enough of the three of them to fill the swill bin where they found little Zilla Calumy. No, never tangle with a wholehearted amateur."

Tell-tale toothbrush

The curse of pyorrhoea and what to do about it

by HARVEY GRAHAM, M.D.

AMERICAN ADVERTISING agents first made the "Pink Toothbrush" a familiar bogy. "Four out of every five" had it, they warned.

Careful studies undertaken in the R.A.F. during and since the war show that not four out of every five, but two out of every five men and women do indeed have either gingivitis or pyorrhoea.

Strictly speaking, gingivitis (an inflammation of the gums) is the common condition and a true pyorrhoea is rare. I am using "pyorrhoea" in the sense accepted by most general readers rather than in a strictly medical sense.

Pyorrhoea in this sense is common and is an inflammation which attacks first the tough membrane between the root of a tooth and the jawbone. Several teeth may be affected and may even become loose.

The inflammation soon extends to the gums. When the gum near the affected tooth is pressed beads of blood and pus appear and there is a characteristic and unpleasant odour.

Linked With Other Diseases

Pyorrhoea can exist as a local disease in its own right. Or it may be associated with a score of other diseases. It is found sometimes in cases of rheumatism, diabetes, gout, anaemia, tuberculosis and syphilis.

When this happens, cure or improvement of the general condition will often affect the disease.

If the pyorrhoea continues, septic products from the inflammatory area at the roots of the teeth may be absorbed into the general circulation and may cause all sorts of troubles.

For any case of pyorrhoea, the first treatment must be undertaken by the dentist. All stumps and dead or pulpless teeth have to be extracted and all the other teeth will need scaling and polishing. When this is done there will still be pockets of infection between some of the teeth and these have to be treated. Some can be cleared up by repeated irrigation with antiseptics. Some will need to be cut out by a minor dental operation.

All sorts of other treatments have been tried with varying success. Injections of a mercury salt helped some cases but not others. Vaccines have been prepared and seemed to do a little good in a few cases.

Painting the gums with tincture of iodine often helps. "Talbot's iodine" is the prescription most often advised.

Carefully controlled studies have shown that pyorrhoea has nothing to do with lack of vitamins and no amount of vitamins in the diet or taken in pills or capsules has any effect on the ailment. On the other hand, pyorrhoea is more common in people whose diet is not varied and well balanced.

Lady May Mellanby has shown in a series of studies how the teeth of London schoolchildren have steadily improved in recent years. This is almost certainly due to improvements in diet, thanks to the provision of cheap milk and school meals.

No "pink" here. Children often get pyorrhoea from mouth-breathing

Even with the best dentist doing everything he can, cure of a bad case of pyorrhoea may take several months. In the worst cases cure can always be achieved, but only by extraction of all the affected teeth.

Altogether pyorrhoea is one of the most difficult dental and medical problems. There is no easy answer because the precise cause of pyorrhoea is not known.

Three Ways Of Prevention

There are three important items in a programme of prevention. Mouth-breathing needs to be corrected. General health must be looked after. And all the principles of dental hygiene must be observed.

Mouth-breathing is never a good thing and any child who does it is a candidate for pyorrhoea.

In most children mouth-breathing is simply a thoroughly bad habit which can be corrected. At night the child should be made to wear a simple mouth-shield which is easily made by the dentist. Then he cannot breathe through his mouth and must breathe through his nose.

For one hour a day at least he must be made to keep a flat object between his lips. Then again he has to breathe through the nose.

Applied with patience and persistence, these simple measures will correct mouth-breathing which in children is the commonest cause of pyorrhoea.

The important thing is to keep the spaces between the teeth free from food debris in which the kind of germs that are associated with pyorrhoea can find a comfortable resting place. A strict toothbrush drill is necessary—certainly night and morning, and if possible after every meal.

Remember, too, that it should be as soon after meals as possible. Carbohydrates of all kinds—sweets, cakes, confectionery, pastry—if left between the teeth, form harmful acids. The peak of acid production is reached twenty minutes after each meal.

The best way to start a child using a toothbrush is the one adopted automatically by most parents.

Up to the age of two there is no sense in trying to teach a child to operate anything so complicated as a toothbrush. Between the ages of two and three children are passionate mimics. If they see their parents brushing their teeth they, too, will clamour for a toothbrush.

That is the right time to buy baby a toothbrush and the rest follows easily enough. Full efficiency cannot be expected at first but will come in time.

The toothbrush is the important weapon for dental hygiene and needs regular replacement. What you put on it is less important. Salt and water is inexpensive and good for the teeth and so is soap and water.

But toothpastes and powders with their varied flavours and lush lather have the advantage of tasting better. It is easier to spend the right length of time and give the teeth a thorough brushing in every direction with a pleasant toothpaste.

Fluorides Experiment

A hopeful experiment that is now being tried on schoolchildren in this country concerns fluorides. Where fluorides occur naturally in drinking water and amount to one or more parts per million, there are fewer cases of dental decay.

Adding fluorides to drinking water that does not contain them presents technical difficulties. Therefore dentists have been trying to achieve the same sort of protection against dental decay by painting the teeth with sodium fluoride. There are four applications at intervals of a week and the idea is to treat children at three, seven, ten and thirteen years of age.

If, as is claimed, this has the effect of reducing dental decay by forty per cent, it will also help to prevent pyorrhoea. Pyorrhoea rarely appears in a mouth free from dental decay.

Finally, there is a simple trick that is always worth trying at the first sign of trouble with gums—on the first appearance of a pink toothbrush or bad breath.

Swill Vigorously

Dip the toothbrush in hydrogen peroxide (the ten-volume kind, not the twenty-volume). Rub it lightly over any unscented soap. Scented soap tastes horrid. Clean the teeth vigorously till a nice lather of H_2O_2 and soap appears. Swill this vigorously round the mouth ten times before spitting out.

This technique night and morning for a fortnight will stop many minor gum troubles. For anything more in the way of pyorrhoea—or gingivitis—see a dentist as soon as possible and do everything he advises.

All his skilled work is of no avail unless the patient co-operates to the full with the tedious, prolonged drill of tooth brushing and mouth washing that is essential to the control of pyorrhoea. And seeing the dentist once every six months is the best way to avoid pyorrhoea as well as all sorts of other troubles.

Armed with cleaning machines—and secret formulas for removing stains—Robert Rashbrooke's shock troops prepare to mop up a Piccadilly office

Charring gets organized

by HENRY FIRTH

Cleaning an office today calls for carpet shampooers and scrubbing machines, and a char is an "operative"

IN THE YEAR 1937, when Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister of England, a struggling young freelance journalist named Robert Rashbrooke trod the hard pavements of Fleet Street.

He chased ambulances, pestered editors, pounded his typewriter till 2 a.m., sold bits about the Romance of London River, dreamed of the scoop of the century—and struggled.

One day he was on the job as usual, haunting the offices of a Sunday newspaper when the lordly proprietor himself walked in. The young freelance journalist, who had approached him twice before and had been treated kindly, lost no time in renewing the offer of his services.

But this time the famous man was testy. "Don't come bothering me, young man," he snapped, and waved Rashbrooke away towards a group of woman cleaners gossiping along the corridor. "If you really want to make money, organize these charwomen!"

The young man went away resentful and disappointed. Organize charwomen! What a silly, trivial thing to say!

It was not till he was sitting in the office of an insurance manager friend several days later that it dawned on him that there might have been more than just annoyance behind the Press lord's parting shot.

Abruptly, he asked the insurance man how he got his office cleaned. "Oh, I don't know," said the branch manager, slightly startled. "Woman comes in most evenings, I think."

And the windows? "Oh, a window cleaner drops in once in a while. . . ." And the wastepaper baskets? Well, the manager supposed the porter emptied those—sometimes.

What all these small services cost him, the manager couldn't say. But at Rashbrooke's insistence he got together the bills and totted them up. They averaged £10 a month.

And the office still looked dingy. A leg of the manager's chair was loose. The towel in the washroom was filthy.

There was a thoughtful look on Rashbrooke's face as he walked home that evening. It began to look as if the newspaper lord had known a thing or two.

One Bill To Pay

Next day he went back to the insurance office and laid before the manager a proposition.

Let him pay to him, Robert Rashbrooke, the £10 a month he spent on charladies, window-cleaners and what-have-you, and everything—*everything*—would be taken care of. Windows would be cleaned, floors polished, paintwork renovated, clean towels supplied, telephone disinfected. . . .

The office would be really clean—and there would be only one bill.

Amused, but impressed despite himself, the manager agreed.

Rashbrooke had at this time £8 in the bank, an old Bentley car and a supercharged Rudge-Whitworth motor bicycle. He now sold the Bentley and the motor-bike and acquired male and female staff. The woman had on occasion "done" for his mother; the man he got from a Labour Exchange.

He then went along to a store in Holborn and purchased a collection of brooms, brushes, buckets and a vacuum cleaner.

He still went on with his journalism. But in between pounding his typewriter he would be down at the insurance office experimenting with the vacuum cleaner or trying out new ways of cleaning windows.

All-in Service

At the end of the three months, both Rashbrooke and the insurance manager were well pleased. The new cleaning contractor started off on a tour of all the people he knew with offices, offering his expert, all-embracing service.

If a chair leg was loose, he stressed, his carpenter would fix it. If the lighting needed checking, the electrician would take it in his stride. In the end, it would be money saved.

It sounded convincing. The roll of clients lengthened. The staff grew.

At first Rashbrooke had thought that he was pioneering a quite new field of business. But now, as he branched out, he struck competition. There were, he discovered, at least thirty other people who had the same idea.

His aim now was to go one better. He put his employees into white uniforms with "General Services"—the name he had chosen—printed on the breast pocket. He took small ads in the papers. He studied new shapes of brushes, new cleansers, the idiosyncrasies of flooring.

"Clean my offices?" said one prospect. "You'll have to *find* me offices first!" Rashbrooke took up that challenge. He was well equipped to do so, for already he knew half the empty buildings in London—ready to contact new occupants the moment they moved in.

A building was found—but the inside was wrong. Rashbrooke pawned his wife's jewellery and his own gold cuff links, tore the inside out of the building and rebuilt it.

He had a new client—and a new department. But as an estate agent, he says, his aim was not to make profits but merely to extend his cleaning field.

Thus in two years Rashbrooke found himself, rather to his own surprise, head of a thriving business with a partner, two hundred employees and the confidence of his bank manager.

Then the war broke out and the business which Rashbrooke had built up through two hard years began falling apart in as many months.

Rashbrooke and his partner Gelardi found themselves in North Africa engaged on a rather larger mopping-up operation. They returned five years later to find their clients bombed out, their equipment lost or stolen, their capital dissipated.

Operation Mop-up

But the staff began to come back—Smith, the building department manager, from the Commandos; Laker, speaking Basuto like a native, from the R.A.S.C.; Stone, the assistant works manager, from the Navy.

Their Forces training now made its contribution. Staff work was important. Before each new job, a recce, a careful survey. So many square feet of flooring of such and such a type, so many carpets, so many awkward corners—the task was broken down into its constituents and the constituents were analysed.

There were, for instance, twenty-five different sorts of flooring—lino, composition, terrazzo, stone, granolithics, rubber tiles . . . and each had its peculiarities and its appropriate treatment. Carpets and the cleaning thereof was a vast lore in itself, now organized in a separate section under

the command of Wing Commander Kennedy from the R.A.F. Regiment.

In the postwar years, cleaning-up became almost as mechanized as warfare. In the works of Cadogan Lane the ranks of scrubbing machines and polishing machines and carpet-shampooing machines lengthened.

"You can't mention a cleaning machine manufactured in England we haven't tried," says Rashbrooke.

While London still sleeps, Rashbrooke's white-uniformed mechanized troops—today a thousand strong—move up through the empty streets to their battle stations. "And for heaven's sake don't call them charwomen," begs Rashbrooke. "They resent it. And the charwoman your mother knew is, anyway, as dead today as the dodo."

Housewives' Sideline

He calls them "operatives." Many of the women, he says, are respectable little housewives who give four hours' work or so morning or evening to augment the family income.

Three hours a day is the minimum allowed and they earn from £2 to £5 a week. Members of the carpet-shampooing teams make around £7 and the window cleaners £8 to £10.

How, for instance, to recognize and treat the twenty-five different types of flooring. To know, for example, that rubber needs handling gently with the mildest soap and very little water if it isn't to rot.

The staff manual—which Sherlock Holmes himself might envy—lists secret formulas for treating dozens of stains from lipstick to blood, through soup, hair cream and nail varnish. One of the commonest is human sweat, sunk deep into the backs of chairs; one of the most obstinate, red ink.

Thus firmly founded on London's limitless dust, Rashbrooke's Empire of Mop and Broom embraces cinemas, airports, embassies, film studios, newspaper offices, the seats of British Railways' carriages, factories . . .

An important feature of Rashbrooke's organization is his staff of persuasive young sales ladies. When they reach up and show the managing director the layers of dust on the high ledges in his office, if he doesn't actually blush with shame, he is at least penitent. When they go on to demonstrate that owing to the dust on his lamps he is losing no less than eighteen per cent of the light he has paid for he generally comes quietly.

Clear The Air

And today, the man who made an operative out of Mrs. Mopp is preparing to become more specialized than ever. His desk is stacked with medical and scientific literature.

Do I realize that one-third of the people who die every year die from respiratory diseases? That respiratory diseases involve air? And that air is alive with noxious germs?

Is it not therefore clear that money spent on spraying this filthy London air *daily* with a special germicide—pleasantly scented—would be money saved in absenteeism averted?

And so, sprays at the ready and carpet shampooers churning, Rashbrooke's white-uniformed legions advance to the assault on London grime.

LABOUR'S FRONT LINE

Continued from page 8

support. The conference hall was ringing with emotional cheers for the revered old man when Bevin rose and in a merciless speech snarled his disgust at him for taking his "conscience round from body to body asking to be told what to do with it." He swung the conference so completely that he broke Lansbury's leadership and in doing so saved the Labour Party from ineffectualism and perhaps even disintegration.

As Foreign Secretary, Bevin has commanded the support of all sections of the country, Conservative and Socialist alike, in much the same way that Churchill commanded national support during the war.

Many people criticize Bevin's caution and his tendency to blame others for his failures; they snicker at his egotism, his illiteracy, his indiscretions and his *gaffes*. But most people like having him where he is. In these dangerous times there is something reassuring about this great, bulky, slow-moving man whose word is his bond and whose integrity is beyond dispute.

His vast experience of his fellow beings is worth the wisdom of many books, although Bevin himself often expresses regret at having been taken from the classroom at such an early age. Once, when he was expecting the Turkish Ambassador, a young man walked into his office. "What are you doing here?" asked Ernest. "I'm sorry, sir, but I've been sent to interpret. The Turkish Ambassador doesn't speak English very well." "That's fair enough," sighed Bevin. "Neither do I."

Bevin's contribution to history already stands out clearly; he has taught the Labour Movement of the Western world that the great issue of the age is not Socialism against Capitalism, but the survival of democracy. For that alone he will be remembered as a great Foreign Minister.

Cripps—Least Accessible

Sir Stafford Cripps is the most brainy, most eccentric, least accessible and least sympathetic member of the Cabinet. Winston Churchill once said of him: "There but for the grace of God goes God." Because England is a country of superb contradictions it is not surprising to learn that this man, at one time on the extreme Left of his Party, is the son of a peer, spent his childhood in a forty-roomed house on a 1,200-acre estate and gave up a £30,000-a-year practice at the Bar in 1939 to devote himself to the war effort.

Cripps is tall, thin and forbidding and looks every inch the part he plays as the apostle of austerity. He wears shoes without heels, believing that elevation is bad for his digestion; he is a vegetarian, he does not drink, he goes to bed every night at eleven and rises every morning at four thirty. He works sixteen hours a day.

Attlee tells the story of a man who rang the doorbell of No. 11 Downing Street at five thirty in the morning. A policeman came up to him and asked him what he was doing. "I have an appointment," replied the man. The policeman's eyes narrowed with suspicion. "Just move along," he ordered quietly. "But I have an appointment," the man insisted. "Now listen, I don't want to 'ave to take you to the station. . . ." "If you don't believe me you can make inquiries yourself," the man cried angrily. "I have an appointment with Sir Stafford Cripps." "Oh, 'im!" replied the officer. "Begging your pardon, sir. Go right up."

Cripps's ability always to answer any question was shown at an early age. When he was eight years old his brothers referred to him as "young Solomon" and nicknamed him "Dad."

In those days, Cripps's enterprise was on strictly private lines. His first business venture appears to have been when his parents had guests for the weekend; he removed the cakes and buns from the drawing-room, took them to the nursery and put a sign on the door: "Tea: Sixpence."

Although Churchill made use of Cripps during the war, sending him to Moscow as ambassador in 1940, and to India on a special mission in 1942, he was not an outstanding success. This may have been due to the fact that a sympathetic personality, the one quality which Cripps lacks, was an essential in these particular appointments.

Those who work with him respect his intellect and his capacity for work, but sometimes find his leadership somewhat exacting. He holds a meeting of his financial experts and under-secretaries every morning at nine o'clock, which is referred to behind his back as "morning prayers"; and if anyone arrives even a minute or two late he has an unpleasant habit of nodding curtly and saying, "Good evening."

Cripps's lack of warmth may prevent him from becoming Prime Minister. That people seldom see themselves as others see them is illustrated by the fact that when a well-known American came to England recently someone asked Cripps what he thought of him. "A nice fellow," came the reply, "but he lacks the human touch."

Bevan—Most Controversial

Aneurin Bevan is the most controversial figure in the Government. For years he has been something of a boy wonder. He went to work in the coal pits of South Wales at the age of thirteen, rose through the trade unions and in 1929 came to Parliament as the Member for Ebbw Vale.

His soft Welsh voice, his immense laugh, his romantic appearance and his fire and eloquence on the floor of the House immediately captured the imagination of political London. The Press talked of him as a future Prime Minister, while Conservatives, intrigued by this passionate, picturesque young man, at once bade him to their parties.

He talked loudly of his burning hatred for the Tories, but spent so many pleasant evenings drinking champagne at Lord Beaverbrook's house that Brendan Bracken described him as a "Bollinger Bolshevik." But although "Nye" enjoyed the good things of life, his political convictions remained steadfast.

His violent abuse of the Tories, his boisterous spirits and scathing tongue have made him more hated by the Opposition than any other figure on the Labour benches. Churchill referred to him during the war as "that merchant of rudeness."

His Churchillian Traits

An M.P. once commented: "Nye and Winston are natural antagonists because they're so much alike."

Churchill would be insulted at this comparison, but so far as lack of balance is concerned it carries some truth. Both are brilliant, both are erratic and both have personalities that arouse a mixture of admiration and hostility. One of Bevan's gestures which has done more to annoy the general public than almost any other is his insistence upon attending embassy functions and parties at Buckingham Palace in a brown suit in order to show his contempt for convention.

Bevan's father was a miner. When he was sixteen Aneurin memorized and recited long passages of Shakespeare in order to overcome a stutter which is occasionally still noticeable in his speech.

Soon after he came to Parliament he married Jennie Lee, a pretty, vivacious Scottish M.P., who once remarked that politics was her career and marriage her hobby. At present she is a director of *Tribune*, a Left Wing weekly review.

His Party Followers

Although Churchill refused to give Bevan a job in his Coalition Government, as Minister of Health the latter has carried the immense burden of rehousing the nation, as well as inaugurating the first National Health Scheme the country has known. He has done both jobs with characteristic violence, arousing agitation and hostility, but Socialists insist that he has done them remarkably well.

Bevan is a member of the Labour Party Executive and as a national figure has a large following, but his influence in the Parliamentary Labour Party is less marked. The extreme Left intellectuals support him, but the trade unionists and the moderates regard him with reserve.

However, the fact that Bevan at fifty-two is a good ten years younger than other leading Ministers causes Members to prophesy that his turn to lead the country will come.

"That is," they say, "if he grows up in time."

This article forms an important chapter in Virginia Cowles's new book, "No Cause for Alarm" (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.), extracts from which are being published exclusively in JOHN BULL. *The book is a study of Britain's politics and politicians by a brilliant American-born author and foreign correspondent, who is herself married to Aidan Crawley, M.P. for Buckingham.*

NOW YOU KNOW

IF YOU WANT to vote at the next General Election you must make sure that you are on the register of electors.

It is too late now to get the present register altered. But there will be another new one on March 15. This coming Sunday (November 20) is the qualifying date. Every household receives a form from the local Returning Officer, asking for the names of all people in the house entitled to a vote. This means British subjects (or citizens of Eire) who are twenty-one or over.

These forms are important, since it is from them that the new voters' lists will be prepared. They should be posted back to the Returning Officer within five days. By January 10 they will be ready for inspection at town halls. You will have fourteen days in which to check your name. If it is not there tell the Returning Officer.

Once you are on the register you are entitled to a vote (but not until March 15) in the area in which you lived on November 20.

Cinderella's Shoemaker

The fairy queen brings the shoes to life with a touch of her wand. Then a sixty-guinea bill comes in from the theatrical shoemakers

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Victor Gamba (right): his workshop turns out 2,000 ballet shoes a week

JOHN BRENNA WILL NEVER forget the time Mme Tussaud's burned down. That fire brought him the contract for reshoeing the entire assembly of the famous and infamous and he spent half the night in the Chamber of Horrors.

"Those wax figures were the most obliging customers a shoemaker ever had," Brenna says. "If the shoes were too small, all we had to do was carve away part of the feet."

Although they object to any such surgery on their feet, the general run of John Brenna's customers are just as famous as many in Mme Tussaud's collection. His clients are the stars of stage and screen, for this fifty-year-old Italian with jet-black eyebrows and thick white hair, is a director of Gamba, Shoemakers, a firm which claims ninety per cent of the theatrical footwear trade in Britain.

Johnnie Brenna was a bright, brown-eyed boy of fourteen when his father first took him down to Signor A. L. Gamba's, at the corner of Dean and Old Compton streets, in Soho. Signor Gamba had begun his business at about the time that ballet first came to Britain and, since Gamba's were the first to make ballet shoes in this country, they needed a messenger to deliver their slippers to London stage doors. Johnnie Brenna became that messenger at a wage of seven shillings and sixpence a week.

Pavlova Was Choosy

Nijinsky was the first famous customer young Johnnie served. "He was a very nervous man," Brenna recalls. "So was I. But there has never been a dancer to equal him since."

The firm still treasures a telegram from the great dancer asking for fourteen pairs of its London-made shoes to be shipped to him in Berlin.

Nor, says Brenna, has there been an equal to Pavlova, who won the young Italian's heart when he first waited on her in her home at Golders Green. The ballerina was not the easiest of clients to please and sometimes two days were necessary for her to choose her footwear. On these visits the handsomely moustachioed Signor Gamba would load down his young assistant with as many as 150 pairs of shoes for Pavlova's approval.

"She would keep perhaps thirty pairs," Brenna says. "The shoes she did not like she would throw across the room.

"But she did it with such an air of regal disdain I was terribly impressed. She was a beautiful woman but always very sad. Never did I see a smile cross her face."

When Nijinsky and Pavlova danced, the impresario of the day was Serge Diaghileff, who did things in the grand manner, so grand, in fact, that his creditors became a little worried. Among them, of course, was the firm of Gamba, and after a long period of waiting, it was John Brenna who went to the Alhambra Theatre to try and collect the bill for dancing shoes.

"The maestro had no idea of the value of money," Brenna says. "He just ignored bills until finally we had to issue a writ and I had to deliver it. Diaghileff accepted the writ as if a great honour was being bestowed on him. He made such a sweeping bow and was so dignified that I left the theatre feeling like a cad."

Held As Hostage

Such reception of a bill collector John Brenna has never since encountered. In contrast, he once spent four hours locked up in the Gaiety Theatre when a financially-embarrassed producer attempted to hold him as a hostage for the delivery of shoes for which he had not paid.

The Gambas had accepted the order on the basis of half the payment down and the balance to be paid prior to delivery. Word of the producer's financial difficulties spread through the theatrical trade, and John Brenna went down to the theatre to make sure that payment would be made when the shoes were ready.

"The show was billed to open that night," he says. "When I went into the theatre the producer invited me upstairs to his office. As soon as we entered the room he turned the key in the lock and informed me he wasn't going to let me out until I had called the factory and ordered the shoes to be delivered."

John Brenna is a patient man. He sat and waited. Meanwhile Signor Gamba noticed the absence of his assistant and himself went to the Gaiety. He, too, found himself locked in.

It took an hour of combined resistance on the part of Gamba and Brenna before the producer gave up his scheme. He paid—in cash—and the shoes were delivered.

Stage Superstitions

These trips backstage gave John Brenna his introduction to stage customs and superstitions. He learned that, of all colours, peacock blue is the one which is never used on stage—for costumes or for settings. It is regarded as the worst kind of luck.

Another tradition he has picked up is that to include a circus scene in a London show is a fatal mistake. The record proves, he says, that the ones with circus scenes are bound to flop. It happened to the musical show *The Golden Moth* twenty years ago, and it happened to the revue *Roundabout* this season.

Fred Astaire's personal superstition is a horror of being watched from the wings, John Brenna discovered. He had rushed over to the Empire

John Brenna started at Gamba's as messenger and remembers calling on Nijinsky and Pavlova. Here he's attending dancers from *King's Rhapsody*

Theatre with new shoes for Astaire, who was dancing in *Lady Be Good*.

"The stage manager chased me out," he says. "He told me that not even he was allowed to watch from the wings while Astaire was dancing. It didn't matter how many people were seeing the show out front, he just had a phobia about people watching him from the wings."

No Shoes On Tables

Commonest of all stage superstitions is the conviction that shoes must not rest on trunks or tables in dressing-rooms. John Brenna respects that superstition whenever he's in a theatre but it is completely ignored in the firm's Soho offices. The workshops, above the showroom, turn out 2,000 pairs of ballet slippers a week, a fair proportion of which find their way across the tables and showcases.

On the tables, the buckles from Sir Henry Irving's shoes — Lady Hardwicke is now having them fitted to a pair of new pumps for herself—may come to rest against one of Dolores Gray's cowboy boots from *Annie Get Your Gun*. Beside them may stand half a dozen felt-soled Chinese shoes for Tyrone Power and Cecile Aubry in the film, *The Black Rose*. These Chinese shoes had to be made and shipped within forty-eight hours of being ordered.

On a shelf awaiting collection may lie half a dozen pairs of slippers for ballerina Marilyn Hightower, of the *Folies Bergère Revue*.

"Hightower wears out one pair of shoes each night," John Brenna says. "They are specially reinforced shoes with a steel waist. The average dancer would wear them for weeks."

In contrast, Prince Littler's production of *White Horse Inn* is still going strong in the provinces with some of the shoes Gamba made for this show ten years ago.

Marilyn Hightower's shoes have rubber soles for dancing on a linoleum-covered stage and to give her sure footing for her pirouettes. Dolores Gray's high boots are built with zippers to facilitate quick changes of costume. For men with laced shoes who must change quickly, Gamba's stock a useful gadget—elastic shoe laces.

Shoes without any laces at all are, of course, even easier to remove, and Gamba's is one of the few places where they still stock spring-sided boots. These were the favourites of our Victorian grandfathers and, according to John Brenna, who sells shoes from every age in history, they are the most comfortable shoes of all time. The spring-sided boot is still a good selling line for street as well as stage use.

Film companies place the largest orders for period shoes and Gamba's boast they have created footwear for almost every period since man began to cover his feet. Some of the models from their workshops now appear in the South Kensington and the Victoria and Albert museums.

Make Short Men Taller

Some film stars even depend on Gamba's for a few inches extra height whenever they are playing opposite an actress who is a bit taller. With professional delicacy John Brenna doesn't reveal their names, but he proudly shows how lifts and special construction methods can add two or three inches to a short man without his fans being any the wiser.

"One of our difficulties with the films," he says, "is making sure our shoes will not squeak. The slightest noise is picked up by the microphones and a pair of squeaky shoes could ruin a scene."

Eliminating squeaks is accomplished by making sure that leather does not rub against leather anywhere in the construction of the shoe. Wherever there must be two layers of leather, the workmen insert a piece of felt or linen between them.

"We've been so successful in making noiseless footwear," Brenna declares, "that when we received an order for a pair of shoes *that would squeak*, we almost had to admit defeat."

When they couldn't get a pair of shoes that would squeak all the time, the firm solved the problem by pasting a piece of sandpaper on the soles so that it made a rasping sound whenever the wearer shuffled across the stage.

Taking The Shine Off

While the demand for squeaky shoes is small, Gamba's often have to supply footwear with a well-worn look. This accounts for the presence among the 100 workers on Gamba's staff of a small man whose occasional duty is to take out a shiny new pair of boots and make them look as if they had been almost worn out.

"He goes down the street and gets some good Soho mud and works it into the shoes," Brenna says. "He also has to scuff them well."

Requests like this usually come from film producers who decide to remake certain scenes. Frequently the original shoes have been discarded and it is necessary that they be duplicated.

One other customer for whom Brenna "ruins" good shoes is a lady lion tamer. She wears a high white boot with colourful inserts. They are specially made for her, then a workman punches holes in them.

"Her problem is that she is so scared that her shoes have to be ventilated," Brenna explains. "She is quite frank about the fact that at every performance she is almost literally scared out of her shoes. We try to make her more comfortable by perforating the leather so that her feet won't be soaked in perspiration."

To Prevent Acrobats Slipping

In addition to lion tamers, John Brenna's clients include other circus folk with special requirements. Acrobats and wirewalkers demand shoes that will not slip, and the answer to this problem has been found in imported buffalo hide from North America. The buffalo hide is tough, flexible and thin.

The soles are guaranteed for two years even though they are so light that the acrobats can feel the floor through them.

Pythons, crocodiles, lizards, sharks, ostriches also contribute their hides to the Gamba workshops.

"Shark skin wears well and ostrich makes a very handsome walking shoe," Brenna says.

These rarities are used for shoe uppers in competition with expensive brocades and damasks and even a gold net which costs £10 a yard.

Stage shoes have to be made of the best materials because an actor or actress may have to wear the same shoes every day for a twelve-month run. Only the finest leather is used and it is often buffed down to increase the flexibility of the sole.

Special For Undertakers

Individual needs and measurements are kept on a file resembling a roster of the great from the days of Caruso and Pavlova down to the present.

"It's a rare day when we don't have a frantic call from a producer," John Brenna declares, "but our strangest request came from a firm of society undertakers. They wanted shoes with paper-thin soles covered with rubber, guaranteed not to make any noise. They got them."

When Frances Day wanted something striking for a modern play, Gamba's gave her a pair of shoes without toes and backless. They started a fashion and gave a fillip to the fashion shoes designed for the firm by Edward Gamba.

Signor A. L. Gamba's other son, Victor, is in charge of production.

With the pantomime season ahead, Gamba's have switched production to fill the needs of some thirty to forty pantomimes—the Palladium alone will require 400 pairs of shoes.

This is the line which earns John Brenna the title of Cinderella's Shoemaker, though Gamba's have never been able to produce a real glass slipper for the fairy-tale heroine. Their Cinderella model is one decorated with diamanté studs that scintillate on stage.

The price—eighteen guineas before the war—has gone up to sixty guineas.

For that money Cinderella really needs a fairy godmother.

The Sporting Spinsters

by **BRETON AMIS**

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

The sisters shared the shop, but couldn't share a husband. And the butcher wanted the shop. Who was to get which? That was the problem

IN OUR PART OF THE COUNTRY we say that a younger sister who marries first has given her elder sister a pair of green stockings, green being the colour of jealousy.

Mrs. Hockett, who hated the Davenport sisters, was knitting a green stocking to hang in the window of her hat shop if Rosie Davenport married Fred Swift, and a blue stocking to hang if Annie Davenport won him. This was clever, because Annie is bookish and runs the little lending library attached to their sweets and tobacco.

The sisters weren't young. Meek, sandy-haired women with pale skins, dove-grey eyes and small pink mouths, they might have been any age between the early thirties and the middle forties.

Every evening after shop hours they were out walking together, in soft grey tweeds, soft Breton hats, and crêpe-soled brogues. Two little grey mice. They went to church twice on Sundays and to choir practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Fred Swift was also in the choir. Bass, of course. During the week he wore a straw hat and a striped apron that had plenty to cover. Some people said a glimpse of Fred was worth twopence on the meat ration; others said he short-weighted them and grew fat on what should have been theirs.

In truth, Fred got his girth, his florid complexion, and his happy outlook on life from pint pots at the Woolpack. And according to the doctor he got his lumbago from the same source, beer being as bad for his lumbar regions as it was for his blood pressure.

FRED didn't care. He was treating the lumbago on what he believed to be the homoeopathic principle of giving it repeated doses of what was bad for it.

If he hadn't been a butcher he might have been a bookmaker. He was a sporting man, and the more spiteful of his customers said he was a good judge of horseflesh.

Although his shop in the market was next to the sisters', he didn't pay much heed to them. Flush with cash after a nice win on Nimbus in the Derby, he tried to buy them out so that he could extend his narrow box of a shop which hardly had room for a couple of carcases beside his own, but they weren't interested in his offer; that wasn't where their interest lay.

He soon lost his winnings. Full-blooded men with merry blue eyes peeping from rosy cheeks are attracted by curving cushiony figures and brassy gold hair. Fred found what he wanted in the neighbouring villages, but during the cigarette shortage the sisters

The sisters took separate sides of the road and stepped out. Fred walked in the middle, giving advice and encouragement

had kept him going with twenty a day, so he was gallant to them although they were vegetarians.

And as vegetarians, they seemed to spend too much of their time looking through the narrow window of his shop, especially on Friday nights when he was cutting the week-end joints with young Hockett to help him. With his straw hat tipped back, his rising sun of a face dewed with moisture as he wielded the cleaver, and his striped stomach heaving with merriment at some quip of young Hockett's, there was an animal quality about him which made two pairs of dove-grey eyes glisten.

MRS. HOCKETT, their enemy, reported that they took it in turns to leave their shop and go up to the bedroom window to watch him digging the garden, and that they stood on chairs to peep into his sitting room while he was at supper. (A large point steak, several lamb chops, and a mixed grill of kidneys and liver, according to some of his customers; but we didn't believe this any more than we believed Mrs. Hockett, who had been a brassy blonde herself in the nineteen-thirties, and hadn't outgrown her impulses although her hair was now dark).

What we did know was that the sisters stood on either side of Fred at choir practice, sandwiching him so that he looked like a huge wedge of underdone beef between two pallid slices of bread, and that they took it in turns to share a hymnal with him.

When we twitted him about it, Fred only grinned.

"I'm safe enough in church," he said, "and I can drown Annie when she sings flat."

Then he was laid low by the attack of lumbago that was to change his life. His married sister couldn't come to look after him because she had troubles of her own, so we did what we could, and the Davenport sisters did more than most. One of them could mind their shop while the other minded him, and the Hockett boy looked after the butchery.

Young Hockett, who had a watching brief from his mother, reported that they went all out to get Fred.

Annie, the elder, made him blancmanges, jellies, and milk puddings; Rosie sat by his bed and read the racing news to him. The doctor himself let slip that Rosie spent hours holding Fred's hand in those first few days when he was howling with pain, but it was Annie who ironed the brown paper over his back and, although the doctor hadn't prescribed it, rubbed him with macassar oil.

They put a walking-stick by his bed for him to tap if he were taken bad at night, and on the night Mrs. Hockett had smuggled him a couple of bottles of strong ale by her lad, he tapped the walking-stick at midnight.

They both went in, fully dressed, leaving the shop door open and all the lights on, to show that it was an errand of mercy. Unfortunately, the open door let in a raging draught that was worse for Fred than the beer.

But he was grateful to the sisters.

"They just couldn't do enough for me!" he declared at the Woolpack, which was his first port of call when he was on his feet again. "In and out, in and out, all day and all night as well, if I'd wanted them. Looked after me better than my own sister would have done—and didn't walk off with a couple of hearts as Lil did last time she was here."

"They'll walk off with your heart, Fred," we said. "You'll be marrying one of them before you know where you are."

To our astonishment, knowing his taste in women, he nodded.

"Maybe I will. And you needn't think what you're thinking, because there comes a time in a man's life when he wants to settle down steady and make something of himself. This village is growing, and when meat comes off the ration I'll be needing larger premises—much larger premises. Lumbago touches up a man's brain, and I got round to asking myself why I should try to buy them out when I can get what I want for nothing, with free help thrown in. They own the freehold of their shop between them."

We knew that. We also knew each of the sisters had inherited a few hundreds along with the shop. Some men would have considered this long ago, but it took the lumbago to bring Fred to his senses. Either of them was his, for the asking.

"But which will it be?" we wanted to know.

"Ah," said Fred. "There you have me. Which?"

We gave him plenty of advice. Rosie was the younger and softer, and not likely to give him much trouble; Annie had the shrewdness his business sorely needed if it was to pay for his betting and his beer. Also, she had made him beef-tea, which showed that her vegetarianism didn't go too deep.

Rosie had a voice that could make the runners in the three-thirty sound like music, but Annie could tot up accounts without a mistake, unless on her side. On the whole, we were in favour of Annie, though Fred seemed to have a slight preference for Rosie.

Rumour winged through the village that the sisters were no longer on speaking terms—that Rosie had been seen buying lipstick—that Annie was making inquiries about a peroxide hair bleach. They still went to church together, but Mrs. Hockett's lad, who was also in the choir, reported that they shared a hymnal between them so that neither could share with Fred, and that they sang different verses to put one another off.

FRED bought himself a striped tie to match his apron, and made big plans for the conversion of the two shops into one. He thought Annie had slightly more in the bank than Rosie, but couldn't be sure she hadn't hinted at this to tempt him. The money mattered, as new refrigerators weren't cheap.

The snag was, whichever sister he married, the other would still have half share in the shop, and he couldn't marry them both. If he proposed to Rosie, whom he preferred, Annie was likely to hang on to her share out of sheer cussedness; if he proposed to Annie, the odds were that Rosie would suddenly remember she was a strict vegetarian and refuse to sell out to a butcher.

Getting their shop had become something of an obsession with him by now, and he worried over it until he began to lose weight.

"I'll have to put it to them straight," he told us, "and leave the decision to them. If it was calf-love I'd choose the heifer," (we knew he meant Rosie) "but it's a business proposition which they'll have to settle by using their gumption."

On the night he put his cards on the table he came back to the Woolpack late and swallowed two double gins, regardless of his blood pressure. Then he said that in spite of his years of experience he had come to the conclusion he didn't know much about women.

The sisters had been prepared to consider his proposition, but not from its business angle. Annie had been reading of two sisters faced with a similar problem who had fought it out with pistols.

As duelling was out of the question, Annie had proposed a walking match to Hurdle, a village five miles away, on the understanding that the last to touch Hurdle market cross gave up all rights to their shop.

Fred hadn't taken to the idea of his fate being decided by a wager. It may have been Annie's large feet, which could cover so much ground that she'd probably walk away with him; it may have been that in spite of his insistence on the business aspect, he was a sentimentalist at heart, as so many butchers are.

But they talked him into it and the race was arranged, winner takes all.

He wouldn't divulge the day or the time, so we posted watchers to make sure we didn't miss the best sporting event our village had known for years. Five miles is a good stretch for two spinsters and bets were laid at the Woolpack, some supporting Rosie because she was the younger, some Annie because of her feet. Rosie, who had recently taken to high heels, would be at a disadvantage, but Annie was slightly asthmatic, which might affect her wind.

Some doubted if vegetarians would have the stamina, but one early closing day, we knew the hour had come. After tea, Fred emerged sheepishly from his shop and was joined by the sisters, each accepting one of his arms as if out for nothing more exciting than an evening stroll.

We weren't fooled. They had the alert, highly-strung appearance of fillies at the starting-gate. Some of us cut across the fields to vantage points on route, but most decided to follow.

Past the church, where the village street ends and the Hurdle road begins, the race started. The sisters detached themselves from Fred and took separate sides of the road, with him marching along the middle giving advice and encouragement. At one time Fred had been quite a walker himself, to outlying villages where the barmaids were his type, and he showed some favouritism by giving Rosie a couple of corks as hand-grips.

They covered the first mile in fifteen minutes, with half the village trailing behind like hounds after the hares. The next mile was done in a shade over thirteen minutes—good going on a warm evening.

Annie was hotting up the pace and her sister was beginning to lag.

Mrs. Hockett, following on her lad's bike, said Rosie's stays were too tightly laced for her to last out, but this was given the lie when Rosie put on such a spurt that even Fred had a job to keep up with her. At the half-way mark she was leading by the length of a cricket pitch and Annie had stopped to take a pebble out of her brogues.

The battle began from there. Sucking lumps of barley sugar to energize her, Annie tucked in her elbows, pushed out her chest, and got her thin legs working like a racehorse. She soon overtook Rosie, who had gone faint and slightly lame.

BY THIS TIME Fred was looking pretty hot himself, and he eyed the pub at the crossroads wistfully, but remembering he was escorting two ladies he plodded on.

A mile from Hurdle it was Annie's turn to weaken while Rosie, getting her second wind despite her corsets, made ground. Fred pleaded with Annie quite eagerly to withdraw from the race, but she didn't even answer; she took another lump of barley sugar, and half a mile from home they were abreast and walking strongly.

Fred staggered along between them, streaming with perspiration and urging them to cancel the race and call it a day. Instead, Rosie kicked off her high-heeled shoes and took to the grass verge.

They were feeling the pace now. Fred had dropped back, Rosie was limping, having trodden on a flint, and Annie's asthma was beginning to trouble her. The last hundred yards must have been a terrible ordeal for them but they kept at it, neither losing an inch nor gaining one.

It looked like being a photographic finish. They covered the last few strides with their hands outstretched to touch the steps of the market cross, but in the last yard Annie stumbled and Rosie won by a finger-tip.

The elder sister took it like a sport. She kissed Rosie and they sat together on the stone steps, panting a bit, but with more colour than they had ever had before.

We gave Fred a cheer as he crawled up.

Glowing with happy anticipation, the sisters waited for his congratulations, but . . . Fred seemed to have forgotten his gallantry. He went right past the steps without a glance at them, on to the Red Lion, and nothing we could do or say would get him out until the sisters had caught a bus back to the village.

We expected Mrs. Hockett to hang up the green stocking that night, but she didn't. Instead, she hung a pair of corsets in her shop window, perhaps as a tribute to Rosie the stayer.

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Facing Up To It

I SUPPOSE we have all, at times, seen our ambitions thwarted and our plans knocked cockeyed. Against our will we are often forced to tread a path we hoped to avoid.

What do we do then? To set our teeth in a spirit of bitter resentment only makes matters worse. It is only by cheerfulness and faith that we can prove again and again how much better things may turn out than we feared.

The best steel is forged in fiery furnaces. No character ever grew great in ease and quiet places. Goethe said truly that "character is formed in the stormy billows of the world."

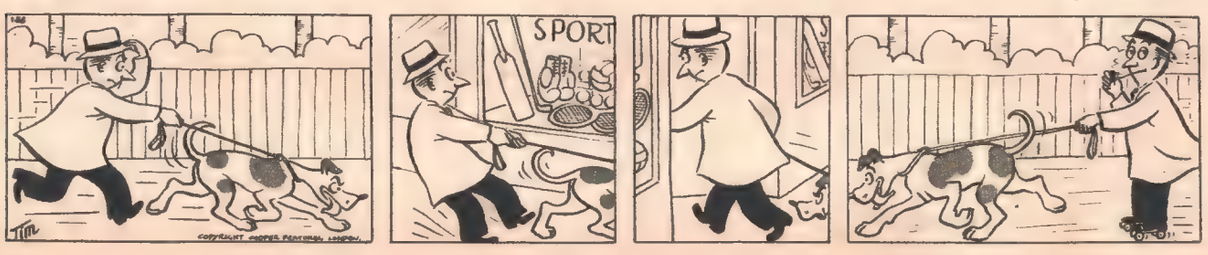
Chance and circumstance, like so many imagined foes, can be overcome if faced squarely.

It's the way we face them that counts.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



MY LIFE (7) by WILFRED PICKLES

I'm given my gas mask after all!

I am called to Portland Place; silly questions in a highly polished office. Back home to a lot of broadcasting, but my war-morale rôle gets me down

THE B.B.C. WENT TO war gradually. It adjusted itself to accept new responsibilities; there were upheavals of staff and many friendly faces disappeared only to return months later under forage caps.

One of the most interesting newcomers was a highly-trained newspaperman, Robert Reid, who arrived at the B.B.C. northern news-editor's desk via the *News Chronicle*. I liked him from the moment we met and as he hailed from Bradford we spoke the same language.

Bob had a sort of prosperous approach to life, a wonderful philosophy that never failed to impress me. I shall always remember his remark the day France collapsed; it seemed to sum up the spirit of the British people in their "finest hour."

The B.B.C. staff were going about the studios with long faces after hearing the bad news and some of the womenfolk were in tears. Then Bob's stocky, plump figure bounced into the canteen and with a smile all over his rosy face he slapped me vigorously on the shoulder.

"Well," he said, "we're in t'final!" I thanked my lucky stars for such a man as company on that day.

We had tremendous fun with the northern news, and one story stands out clearly even today. There was a report that the Salvation Army had rushed to a bombed house in Manchester, taking five loaves with them, and we added the line, "There were, however, no small fishes." We found ourselves in hot water over that!

Red Tape Victim

Even in wartime the broadcasting machine was bound so tightly with red tape that we had the ridiculous situation in which I was denied a pass to enter the building on the grounds that I was only a temporary announcer! Only permanent officials were given the permits which were so essential to get past the commissionaires.

Although I was known to them by now, we had day after day the wearisome procedure of uniformed commissionaires having to telephone the defence officer on duty in the building to inform him that I was at the front door.

It occurred to me that if the occasion arose when I had only minutes to spare to get to the microphone, the time lost at the front door unravelling the red tape might prove disastrous. Eventually, after a great deal of pleading and reasoning and a few plain words, I got my pass.

Being a temporary announcer had another drawback: I was not entitled to a gas mask. Freddy Allen and other members of the staff were issued with Service-type respirators, but I, as a temporary, did not qualify to be saved. And although I was getting used to absurdities, I rather smarted under this one!

It was at this time that one of the biggest movements of staff took place: the B.B.C. Drama Repertory Company was moved to Manchester and I was fascinated by the host of big-name broadcasters—producers and actors—who descended on us.

Val Gielgud was among them, and I asked him if he would come out to our local village club to talk about his job as head of the B.B.C. Drama Department. Val readily agreed. I remember taking him into the bar where a local shopkeeper grabbed his arm, saying: "Mr. Gielgud, I've heard a lot about you. Will you 'ave a drink with me?"

"Certainly, thank you very much," Val replied.

Presenting him with half a pint of beer, the plump, red-faced shopkeeper looked at Val and said: "Are you by any chance a Portuguese?" And Val laughingly retorted: "No, I come from London!"

"London! Well, what the 'ell are you doing wi' that black beard on, then?"

Shortly after the arrival of the Drama Company Freddy Allen was asked to join the news-reading team in London and when he left, Ralph Truman stepped into an announcing job.

A fine actor, Ralph had a delicious sense of fun, and one of the things he revelled in was his inability to pronounce composers' names.

One day when he was about to announce an organ recital, he asked me how to pronounce the name Kaminicus and yet, only a few minutes later, as I sat in the office listening to his announcement, I distinctly heard him say: "Kami—nicus."

Far from feeling any remorse on the grounds that he might have offended some susceptible people among the listening millions, he came into the office rocking with laughter and slapped me across the shoulders.

"Did you hear that, old boy?" he roared. "Kami——" The rest dissolved in laughter.

The pressure of work necessitated both Ralph and I being on duty at the same time on most days, and the need for a third announcer became so pressing that I telephoned John Snagge in London and asked him if he could arrange for a reinforcement.

Although I was now senior announcer in Manchester, I was still a freelance; but it came as no surprise when I was told there was a suggestion I should be made a member of the permanent staff. This was very much to the liking of Mabel and myself at this time, when the appeal of security and a permanent post was so strong, and her mother and father were intensely thrilled about it.

So I left for London for my interview with their best wishes in my ears and a date with them at London Road Station for the following evening.

Entering Broadcasting House in Portland Place for the first time was as terrifying an experience as my initial audition had been in Manchester. Everything was distressingly impersonal—and cold.

On arrival I was ushered into a neat and highly polished office to find myself face to face with my interviewer, a Mr. D. H. Clark. He asked me a number of questions which irritated me because I considered them irksome and irrelevant.

My Schooling; My Religion

To his question, "Where were you educated?" I lied unblinkingly and quoted my brother's school at Rishworth because I was certain that if I explained I had been a half-timer the day would have been a sorry one for me.

Then I was asked about my religion and I wondered, as I answered, what on earth that had to do with broadcasting. However, Mr. Clark assured me that I would be appointed at a salary of £480 a year.

"But I must warn you that if you take part in any other programmes, you will have to do them for nothing," he added, and I thought of all the work I had been doing under contract, apart from announcing.

Even worse was to come, for Mr. Clark then underlined the fact that if I did any jobs outside the B.B.C. for which I was paid I would have to declare such earnings to the Corporation. They were empowered to claim this money!

In spite of these dampening factors I was pleased to have got the job and to be earning a fixed salary at last, even though, as I was clearly told, I was only on the wartime staff and did not qualify to be included in the Corporation's pension scheme.

For my transition into a permanent staff-man I was rewarded with that weird-looking companion of the war years, a respirator; while, in return, I literally gave the B.B.C. my services in a number of new programmes. One of these was evolved by my friend, Richard North, who had become head of the variety department and was going all out to keep it alive.

In Lieu Of A Drink

His idea was that a well-known comedian should be interviewed each week in a fifteen-minute programme entitled *Kingpins of Comedy*, with me as interviewer. The programme proved even more popular than we had expected and I enjoyed going back-stage to hear something of the life-stories of the men who made the millions laugh.

It was good for me that I was not a heavy drinker, as comedians are notoriously hospitable; though I remember the occasion when I suggested to one comedian after his broadcast that he might come with me for a drink and he replied: "No, thank you. I never touch it," and promptly thrust a pound note into my hand!

I had to be most tactful in explaining

Pickles as *Billy Welcome*: "For me the programme lost its honesty"

Pickles and Richard North planning *Kingpins of Comedy*: "I found it hard handling some old-timers of the music hall whom I interviewed"

that I was quite willing for him to buy me a drink but I could not possibly accept money. He had probably heard something about B.B.C. salaries and thought the cash would be more useful to me than a drink.

I must have called on nearly every comic in the business in the two years the programme ran. Those used to broadcasting were easy to handle and in this class were Arthur Askey, Jack Warner, Ted Ray, Tommy Handley, Wee Georgie Wood and Robb Wilton. But I had difficulty with some of the old-timers of the music halls.

That grand old trouper Shaun Glenville was so nervous that the perspiration from his face splashed on his script; he was also concerned about what his wife, Dorothy Ward, who was listening at home, would think about his performance. He kept referring to her as "my old woman," although in fact she looked delightfully young and got her turn in the programme some months later.

Tommy Handley And The Sherry

To celebrate the hundredth programme in the series we featured Dave Burnaby, and Tommy Handley, who was playing in Oldham that week, joined us at a little party for which the B.B.C. stretched a point and allotted us a bottle of sherry. But as we all waited about the board room, the girl who was to serve the drinks told us she could not find a corkscrew.

There was an awful silence as we all stood about, when suddenly to break the tension, Dave Burnaby said: "Well, Tommy, what's cooking?" And Tommy Handley flashed back: "The sherry, if we can only find a corkscrew!"

Long after the others had dispersed, Richard North and I were still discussing *Kingpins of Comedy*, and from that we went on to other programmes and presently roughed out an idea for another show. Richard had noted my ability to talk in different dialects, ranging from my native Yorkshire to Irish, Welsh and the crisp speech of the Scots, and my range of voices which enabled me to take off a woman or a child.

We knew that Jack Train was gifted in a similar way, and planned a programme in which Jack and I took all the parts in a sketch. All we needed was a small band and a singer.

So *Two's a Crowd* was born on the Forces Programme. It became a winner, and Jack and I formed a happy partnership which we were forced to break off because of my move to another job.

It was at this time that Geoffrey Bridson returned to Manchester to revive one of his most original and fascinating features, in which old Frank Nichols had played the title part of "Harry Hopeful," a happy-go-lucky character who wandered around the country meeting ordinary people and bringing them to the microphone in their natural environment, whether it was the country pub or the village church hall.

"You shall play the part," Bridson said. "We can't use 'Harry Hopeful' any more, naturally, so you'd better try to find yourself a name."

I Have A Brainwave

Ralph Truman and Robert Robinson, who were now taking the strain of the heavy call on announcers—I was so occupied with other programme work—immediately searched their imaginations for names for me, but I settled on none, and as I was going home on the bus that night, I noticed a chapel in Oxford Road, over the door of which was a sign bearing in enormous letters the words: "YOU ARE WELCOME." It gave me an idea.

What an ideal surname for the character I was to become: Welcome! All the way home to Northenden I thought of a christian name to match. "Billy" seemed just the thing.

The programme was well received and was the forerunner of many more. *Billy Welcome* gave the B.B.C. an idea and they decided to turn us over to the war factories and make propaganda of the programme.

It disturbed me to have to go into canteens of great industrial firms and ordnance works and work up a frenzy of patriotism, national fervour and a "go-to-it" spirit among the overalled grease-stained men and women. I hated the job.

There were marching songs and sentimental melodies and I would interview these folks about their war jobs. I had to ask such questions as: "Are we afraid of Hitler?" and "Can we lick him?" which would be followed by a united decisive roar.

And there were the personal endeavour stories in which a young mother told us about her own effort. "Looking after three children and still doing a grand job in the factory. Good lass," I would say, giving her a pat on the back.

How I loathed it! How embarrassed I felt! I would have been happier if the B.B.C. had allowed me to explain to those grand folks just why I was among them.

I wanted to introduce myself with: "I've come to see if I can't help you to work harder. This show is supposed to push up your confidence and make you keener to do your jobs." But that was always kept veiled.

Rank Propaganda

For me the programme lost its honesty and its pleasing simplicity. It was rank propaganda under a cloak of entertainment and it tormented me throughout the several months that it ran.

We went to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the West country and I gradually came almost to despise "Billy Welcome," who by now was not feeling anything like so hearty as he had to appear to the tank-builders, the aeroplane makers and the folks who produced the bombs.

I often wondered what Geoffrey Bridson felt about the misdoings of the radio character he had twice conceived, but even on his home ground—a B.B.C. studio—he was quite non-commital.

It was during one conversation with Bridson that he introduced me to that fine actor and unique personality, Robert Farquharson, whose brilliance was touched off by a peculiar mannerism: he affected a stammer to time his lines better when telling a story.

He came into several of Bridson's programmes and one lunch-time on a boiling summer's day I took him into the B.B.C. canteen. Lining the counter ahead of us was a bevy of secretaries who were all wearing light summer frocks.

We immediately realized the hopelessness of trying to get a meal there and left, and as we did so, we ran into Bridson, who asked Farquharson if he had had his lunch, to which came the reply: "N-no, Geoffrey, W-Wilfred and I have been in the c-canteen and all we can see are the s-steaming haunches of a lot of typists!"

During a rehearsal he told me: "I never play in the theatre these days. They always cast me for a part where I either commit rape or incest. With six performances and two matinées I can't stand it!"

And when I greeted him with, "How are you keeping?" he flashed back in mock indignation. "How am I keeping! You make me s-sound like a c-corpse!"

Much that was good in human nature had been coming out in the earlier, genuine *Billy Welcome* interviews and many listeners had marvelled, as listeners have marvelled since, at the things ordinary folks say at the microphone.

One Lancashire lass I spotted was a middle-aged widow who kept a public house in Oldham where we had called to do a show with the cotton workers on their reactions to war conditions. While having a drink we were struck by the volubility of the landlady and tentatively suggested she might take part in the broadcast.

After some persuasion not only from us but at least a score of men at the bar who urged her to "Go on, lass!" she agreed.

It was our practice to run through the script with each individual who met *Billy Welcome* and in order to familiarize them with the "mike," we used to place it on their own dining-table. Psychologically, this was a sound idea, for ordinary people lost their terror of the contraption which they felt when they saw it in a hall or studio.

But when I went to let the landlady see her script she had an attack of jitters and gasped: "Ah'll mek a mess on it! Oh! Ah shall mek a mess on it!"

Another woman in the thick linen apron who assisted behind the bar was passing through the room with a tray of beers and chirped: "Ah wish they'd let me get at yon 'mike'! Ah'd tell everybody i' Great Britain: 'Get some Wilson's ale into you. That'll cheer y'up!' "

Remembering the unrelenting vigilance of the B.B.C. against advertising of any sort on programmes, Bridson and I chuckled as we imagined the horrified expressions on the faces of the occupants of the third floor at Broadcasting House if that remark had got airborne!

A barmaid telling the people of Britain in their darkest hour to get some Wilson's ale into them! Ale, yes. But Wilson's!

She Produced Three Bottles

When she arrived for the broadcast at the little theatre under the new Manchester public library, the landlady was still not nearly so jolly or talkative as she had been before broadcasting was mentioned. Looped round her wrist were the grips of a string bag and as she disentangled them, she murmured: "Ah'll mek a mess on it!"

As I was about to try and calm her, she drew out of the bag three bottles of Guinness and with a serious look on her face handed one to Bridson, one to me and kept the other herself. "It'll give us all courage," she said, knowingly.

"What, no Wilson's?" I said, and for a moment she forgot her anxiety and laughed.

Apart from *Billy Welcome* I was still tied up with *Kingpins of Comedy* and *Two's a Crowd*, in addition to periodical *Children's Hour* work, story reading—and, in between, announcing.

My time was so taken up that for some weeks I had done little thinking about what lay ahead. It came as the biggest bombshell of my radio career, therefore, when John Snagge telephoned me from London one morning and said: "I am warning you that I shall be speaking to Mr. Coatman this afternoon about your transfer to London. The B.B.C. think it would be a good idea if you joined the news-reading team here."

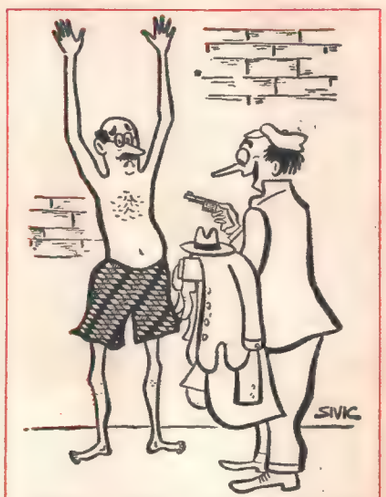
It seemed important and very much a part of the war. It also seemed in those moments to be the most terrifying job in the world.

"What do you think about it?" asked John.

I collected my wits and told him: "That will be all right with me." And when I went home and told Mabel about the suggestion, she said: "Well, there's no question about it. You'll have a go, won't you?"

I could hardly sleep that night for thinking about it.

NEXT WEEK: I join the Portland Place types



"You're lucky I'm not the flashy type!"

Campbell (left) breaks his stick in a fierce goalmouth tussle—note the flying blade. Breakages occur quite often, and can turn victory into defeat

Duke of the Ice

by RICHARD COLLIER

In a sport where most men are reckoned to be old when they're thirty, he's something of a phenomenon. After a thousand games, the rink's rigours are plain routine

AN ICE HOCKEY STAR needs three basic attributes—the eyes of a lynx, a wiry physique, the speed of lightning. To these characteristics one might add a fourth—fortitude. Any player who survives the rough-and-tumble fury of a full sixty-minute game must be resigned to the discovery that his blood pressure (normally 120/62) has now increased to 124/74, that his pulse has accelerated from a normal 72 to a palpitating 120 and that he has lost anything up to six pounds in weight.

In view of all this bodily wear and tear, it is not surprising that most ice hockey players hand over to a reserve after about three minutes of play, and that most of them hand over for good and all and retire from the field of play in their early thirties.

Skipper For Eight Years

Keith William Campbell, therefore, a husky slow-spoken Canadian known as "Duke," who at the age of forty, is skippering the crack Harringay Racers for the eighth season in succession, must be regarded as a phenomenon.

"It's doubtful," remarked one baffled veteran, "whether a broken leg would keep that guy off the ice." It is certain that no ordinary sickness ever would.

Recently, when three members of the team, unknown to Duke, had just gone down with flu, Duke himself, with eyes streaming and a temperature in the hundreds, was making the shaky journey from his Hounslow home to manager Percy Nicklin's office, having decided that this was one game he would have to miss.

"Don't tell me," remarked Nicklin caustically, as Duke's head came round the door, "that *you're* going sick as well."

"Why, no," said Duke feebly, "I —I just looked in to say hallo." He then played what must have been well over his thousandth game with at least enough of his usual punch to keep the fans rising in their seats. Since the team was below strength, he played a full sixty-minute stint, and this, he thinks, "had something to do with curing the flu."

Duke's own explanation of his staying-power is that he learned to skate almost as soon as he learned to walk. He explains: "Back in Canada, folks have miniature rinks in their backyards and every kid has a miniature hockey stick by the time he's five years old.

"They don't start playing seriously in the Flyweight Leagues until they're around eleven, but by the time they're twenty they're not only through with the Junior League—they're old men at the game."

Most of the 200-odd Canadian aces now resident in Britain started with that same advantage, but Duke, in his home town of Stratton, Ontario, possessed the added incentive of an uncle who was an ice hockey promoter and ran a local team called the Esquimos. Duke so idolized a star centre-man of those days by the name of Duke Keates that his friends fastened the nickname on to him.

Early in his career, Duke and a pal, star performers of the Midget League, fancied their chances for a transfer to the Juveniles. Duke, today, stands 5 ft. 8 in. in his socks, which is short for an ice hockey player, but his pal was considerably taller.

The promoter took one look at him and shook his head. "We might be able to fit the tall one in," he said, "but the little runt had better go take a walk."

If Duke took those instructions to heart, it is obvious that from then on he walked in the right direction. In his early twenties, playing for a Canadian National Railways team, he distinguished himself in a match against the Moncton Hawks, a formidably muscular combination which had just won Canada's most coveted ice hockey award, the Allan Cup. Their coach, Percy Nicklin, invited Duke to come and join them.

But Duke decided that playing hard-to-get for a few days would only make his final acceptance the more effective. It was not until the Wednesday following the Saturday that he announced himself willing.

Opportunity Knocked Twice

On the Thursday the team disbanded altogether. Taking advantage of Nicklin's preoccupation over Duke, another promoter, in the meantime, had signed up his entire team.

But this was one of those rare occasions on which opportunity knocked a second time. Barely had Duke had time to collect himself than Percy Nicklin was in England as manager of the Richmond Hawks, a pioneer team of the early thirties.

He invited Duke to join the team as right-winger—with a good chance of transferring to Harringay Greyhounds at the end of the season if he lived up to his early promise.

Duke's showing during that first year was good enough for the transfer to be made, even though there had been several surprises in store for him during the course of it. In the first place, as he soon discovered, full-time ice hockey entailed "starting all over

again—"I might never have played the game before."

Like most teams, they played on an average three times a week, but even on off-days there was the usual one and a half hours of practice every morning, perfecting shooting drills and working out routines.

Apart from a brief postwar season with the Brighton Tigers, Duke has remained at Harringay ever since, so that his story from that date has gradually become the story of British ice hockey since it emerged from the amateur class to collect itself some one hundred thousand fervent fans.

From 1939-40 he skippered the Harringay Greyhounds to win the National League Trophy of the British Ice Hockey Association, and last year, in a neck-and-neck season with Wembley, he accomplished the same feat. This season, with the Greyhounds disbanded, he becomes skipper and defence-man of the Racers.

Think Fast, Move Faster

Since ice hockey is essentially a game of constant attack and counter-attack, the greatest quality that a player can possess, in Duke's eyes, is the ability to think quickly. As one of a team of six, he may be called upon to make a hundred split-second decisions in the course of a game—and move twice as fast to implement them.

The problems arise from the very limitations of the game itself. The minimum area of the ice sheet is 175 ft. by 75 ft., the average speed of play 22 m.p.h.—and the player, who must be capable of checking himself at that speed, is having to cope, apart from his own weight, with an additional thirty pounds of kit.

Duke maintains that ice hockey, although exhausting, should be no more dangerous, when properly played, than a good hard game of rugger. Unfortunately, the rules of the game are flexible enough to permit considerable leeway, and championship matches are often far tougher than they need be.

"Crosschecks," for instance, where a player mows down the opposition by clamping his stick as a barrier across his chest, has, in the past, caused some very gory spills. "Butt-ends"—jerking back the butt of the stick hard enough to stove in a player's ribs—is a tactic nearer to mayhem than sport, and "high sticks" can be slashing, dangerous weapons. These three modes of attack are illegal — but players sometimes get away with them when referee's attention is elsewhere.

Ice hockey, in the language of its followers, is more often "chippy"—aggressive and trouble-seeking—than "panty-waist"—restrained and sportsmanlike.

Occasionally the game's hurly-burly reaches such a pitch that both sides throw discretion to the winds. In one memorable match in which Duke was playing, both sides fell upon one another at the same moment, and the crowd, entering into the spirit of things, proceeded to wreck the stands.

Not even the spectators, in fact, are immune from participation in the game, whether they like it or not. One elderly spectator, attending his first—and last—match had his spectacles whipped clean off his nose by a flying puck.

Other spectators regard it as their natural right to act as arbiters and critics, and a team that repeatedly lets its supporters down is sooner or later in for a very rough passage. On one such occasion, when the fans began to bombard the players with pennies, the players just as suddenly insisted on halting the game to pick them all up—not from a profit motive, but to prevent spills over the coins.

But sometimes, says Duke, the most unsettling aspects of the game are those which have little connection with either players or spectators. Hockey sticks, for instance, just over four and a half feet in length but weighing no more than one and a half pounds apiece, are surprisingly brittle. Last season the team broke over 450 of them and a stick breakage at a critical point of the game may entirely reverse a team's fortunes.

Ice Began To Thaw

Though it is rare for the ice itself (frozen at sixteen degrees Fahrenheit) to present a problem, Duke has even known that to happen. Unknown to the engineers, the freezing plant cut out just prior to a game and the sheet began to thaw.

The financial rewards of the game, although unspectacular, are satisfyingly steady. During the eight months of the season, players receive an average of £15 a week, plus all travelling expenses and equipment, although Duke says frankly that the money side of ice hockey interests him as little as the prospect of a peaceful old age. With no thoughts of retiring at present, he finds that the rigours of the ice have become plain routine.

"I'm like the ice hockey player who was injured pretty badly last season," he says. "He woke up in hospital in a plaster cast and they told him that he'd fractured his spine. 'For Heaven's sake,' he said, 'doctor, tell me—is that going to keep me out of ice hockey for long?'"

THIS WEEK'S COVER

DOUGLAS L. MAYS painted this picture of the fastest game in the world from memories of scores of ice hockey games he has watched in this country and in Canada, where he lived from 1929 to 1931, exhibiting his pictures, one of which was bought by the National Gallery of Canada. "I have seen some good games over here," he comments, "but most of the best players still seem to be Canadians."

Wife who found life dull

by HERBERT HODGE

A WOMAN READER WHO wrote to me while I was in hospital raises a personal problem that we nearly all have to tackle sooner or later—one of those painful problems that don't seem to have any comfortable solution.

She begins by telling me she's married to a "kindly" husband, but I gather she sometimes finds life with him a bit dull. Then she says:

"I wanted a love affair. A month ago I had the chance. It was a perfect opportunity, because no one except the man and myself could possibly have known about it. So I had no fear of hurting my husband or anyone else. . . ."

There are more details, but I'll leave them to our imaginations—in case they should identify her. Besides, I feel fairly sure most of us can dig up a similar situation from our own experience.

The question is, what would we do? I put the question to a married woman friend of mine. She thought it over, then said: "Most of us married women get so few opportunities."

If We Broke The Rules

It wasn't quite the answer I expected. But it was certainly an honest one. She obviously felt each person's opportunity ought to be considered strictly on its merits.

Of course, years ago, we hardly had to think about it. The Church had laid down the rules, and most of us believed in them. If we broke the rules, we were told we'd go to Hell. But if we kept the rules, and resisted all temptation, we knew we'd get our reward in Heaven. It was all quite simple.

But, nowadays, many of us feel that's a bit too simple—even childish. So we try to work out a more reasonable theory for ourselves.

My own belief as a young man was in "free love." Complete freedom in one's love affairs seemed to me a very reasonable theory. But love, as I discovered later, is not a reasonable emotion. And no one is liable to be more unreasonable than the young free-lover himself—especially when he catches his beloved putting his theories into practice with someone else.

So, in the end, most of us take refuge in old-fashioned marriage — whatever ideas we may have about keeping, or not keeping, the old-fashioned rules. Then, maybe years later, along comes this violent urge towards a love affair. Perhaps—as in my correspondent's case — it's the "perfect" opportunity, where one's husband (or wife) need never know and, therefore (we hope), won't be hurt by it. Surely it seems quite reasonable to take what life has offered us—just for this once.

But my correspondent didn't find it worked out like that. She says: "Although I wanted it so much, I found, when it came to the point, that I couldn't go through with it."

"Fine!" says the believer in the older theories. "All's well. There's no longer any problem. Her better self has triumphed; and she's feeling thankful." Perhaps she ought to be. But she isn't. She goes on:

"Instead of feeling a better and stronger woman for having resisted temptation, I'm now sitting at home feeling frustrated and cheated—feeling I could kick myself for having missed something that will never come my way again. I know you're not an advice bureau, but if you could say something helpful. . . ."

Well, there it is. Maybe it'll help a little if I say I think she's done the right thing—though saying that won't help unless we get to the root of it.

I think the trouble begins when we decide that an old-fashioned God with His harps and His Hell is an out-of-date idea. Many of us say the idea is too childish for grown-up people. And I think we're right.

But I sometimes wonder whether we're also right in assuming that we're grown-up—because so many of us, after dismissing the old idea as childish, go on to replace it with another idea that strikes me as being even more childish.

With Jehovah's big stick out of the way, we tend to think we've got a human "right" to take whatever we want from life—and often feel, even if we don't say so, that we ought to be able to eat our cake and have it; spend our money and possess it; even break our marriage and keep it whole.

Price Of Growing Up

In short, we feel life *ought* to give us something for nothing. And when we find that nearly everything we take we have to pay for, and sometimes pay dearly for, we're apt to feel life isn't being fair. But, fair or not, that's how it is. The pain of learning it is the price of growing up.

So I'd like to suggest to my correspondent that what she's feeling at the moment is simply the inevitable pain of becoming grown up. She had the choice—the love affair or the unflawed marriage. Whichever she chose, I think she would have had to pay—in one form of regret or in another. Her own hesitations prove it.

She finally chose the unflawed marriage. I believe she chose rightly. And if the price now seems painfully hard to pay, I think she'll come to feel in time that marriage is well worth it.

HANGOVER HOUSE

by SAX ROHMER

ILLUSTRATED BY SEABRIGHT

With the incriminating evidence found on him, Kennedy thought quickly. Impossible that it should have been in Hilary's bag—yet what other explanation was there?

THREE PROBLEMS FACED Chief Inspector McGraw of the C.I.D. as interrogation proceeded at Hangover House. Who was the stabbed man? Who owned the gold and enamel Egyptian necklace found near him in the grounds? And who had stolen the gold object, shaped like a lipstick or a propelling pencil, now found to be missing from the dead man's effects?

Storm Kennedy, private detective, could have partly answered one of the questions. The dead man, he strongly suspected, had been blackmailing Lady Hilary Bruton. Hilary's father, Lord Glengale, had told Kennedy he believed she was being blackmailed—and this hunch had started Kennedy out on his investigation.

Learning that Hilary and her aunt "Elfie" Elphinstowe (with whom she lived) were going to a party at the dilapidated old country mansion, he had gone, too. And the body of the man had been discovered shortly afterwards, stabbed with a curious Oriental dagger.

At the subsequent investigation, Hilary had given her name as Mary Bruton, in an attempt to avoid publicity. But a check on the guests' cars had soon shown her car to be owned by Lord Glengale, and it did not take McGraw long to see through her subterfuge.

The gold object had been on a table alongside the bed on which the body had lain throughout the night.

Though Kennedy was not aware of the loss, he did know that someone had tried to get into the room where the stabbed man lay. Unable to sleep, the night before, he had caught a fleeting glimpse of someone going up the stairs. This impression had been confirmed by Larkhall Pike, the irascible old occupant of the house, who claimed that the intruder had been a woman.

That, to Kennedy's mind, let out the four men of the party—Peter Faraway, scatterbrained young husband of the hostess, Joan Faraway (who had left the party before the murder had been discovered); Allen Lovelace, a young writer; Mohammed Ibn Lahûn, an Egyptian; and Larkhall Pike himself.

But it did cast suspicion on the four women—Hilary; "Elfie"; Sidonia, a blonde dance band singer who had been flirting with Peter Faraway (and who had herself been found unconscious in the grounds after tripping over the stabbed man); and dark, attractive Mrs. Muller.

Soon after the murder, Kennedy had found Hilary's handkerchief near the body. He had pocketed it, sure that Hilary must have some sound explanation. Now, could he be quite so sure?

As Hilary left, Kennedy saw something that looked like a gold pen. He'd give it to her later, he thought

PART V

The Search Begins

WHEN McGraw and Sergeant Sample came down again, McGraw carefully carried the necklace spread out on a sheet of white paper.

Mohammed was standing before one of the wall cases, examining its contents with apparent interest. He turned as the inspector set the sheet down on the desk; his face remained quite expressionless.

"Please glance over this," McGraw drawled. "Don't touch it."

Mohammed crossed to the desk, his gait slow and graceful, and bent over the exhibit.

There was a momentary silence, and then: "I should judge, sir, this pectoral collar to be seventeenth dynasty Theban. But I am not an expert. If I may make a suggestion—the student who formed the collection in this room would be able to give you a better opinion."

McGraw chewed a while. "I'll bear it in mind."

Mohammed stood upright.

"I cannot tell what theory you have formed, sir, nor even if you have formed any. But I can advise you upon one point: the owner of this gold collar did not kill the man who lies upstairs." He bowed. "Have I your permission to depart?"

Sample exchanged glances with McGraw.

"In one moment," said the chief inspector. "Just a little formality, first. It will apply to everybody. Be good enough to turn out the contents of all your pockets."

Mohammed's gentle eyes showed a flash of anger. Then they grew gentle again. Quietly, he removed his double-breasted black coat and tossed it on to the back of the armchair in which he had been seated. He wore no waistcoat.

"Turn them out yourself, sir."

Sample accepted the invitation

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HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from previous page

stolidly. Mohammed emptied his trouser pockets and exposed the linings.

"Right," drawled McGraw.

Sample replaced the various articles he had found in the dress coat and returned those which Mohammed had carried in his trouser pockets.

"Is that all, sir?"

McGraw nodded.

"Thank you for your co-operation."

"That's a dark horse," Sample remarked after Mohammed had gone.

"Maybe. Only one of several. Get Inspector Hawley," McGraw directed. "All present to come in, and remain inside the house, doors closed. Send a car for a female searcher from Lychgate, and someone to look for fingerprints on the window up there."

"Very good, sir." Sample paused on his way out. "Of course, you saw there's wistaria with branches as thick as my wrist growing right up to that window?"

"Saw it. Just possible the wanted party escaped that way. But if you're sure you locked the door, someone must have unlocked it—and then come back here and replaced the key. There may be fingerprints on that, too—as well as yours. Bring Mr. Pike in when you come back. Look him over, first."

"Yes, sir." But still Sample lingered. "I've been trying to remember when both of us were out of this room at the same time——"

"Remembered?"

"Yes. When you sent me to find Mr. Faraway. I came back, and you weren't here."

"Correct. That's it. I went to the men's room for a brush-up. In that five or six minutes somebody waiting for a chance slipped in. Likeliest place for the key was this drawer. Somebody found it; nipped upstairs and took the gold case; hurried down. No time to relock the door. But returned the key and slipped out again."

"That's my view, sir. But what a cool hand!"

WHEN Sergeant Sample returned, he ushered in Larkhall Pike. The major remained attired in pyjamas and dressing-gown, and carried a newspaper under his arm. His parchment face was dusky with fury. He strode straight to the desk at which McGraw sat. His stoop had vanished; his stride was that of an angry soldier.

But McGraw had taken the measure of his man. He stood up, smiled.

"I believe you have lived here for some years?" he said.

Larkhall Pike swallowed audibly, and it seemed with difficulty.

"My brother, Benedict, permits me to occupy the house during his lifetime. He has a perverted sense of humour. He knew I couldn't afford to keep it up. He knew I couldn't sell it. And he insisted that the property must not be leased to anybody."

"Is that so?"

McGraw's drawl was sympathetic.

"I have one man, a semi-imbecile, who cultivates the vegetable garden, and looks after me. Sleeps out. I live on eggs. Produce 'em. This dodge of letting the place for parties was suggested by Jarretts, the London caterers. Damned undignified, but taxation today doesn't allow for dignity. Have to eat. Fools come down to get drunk. Rich fools. Black market. Fiddling while Rome's burning. No closing time."

McGraw nodded.

"The house is mostly unfurnished?"

"Yes. We are at present seated in my living quarters."

"And you sleep upstairs there?"

"Unless there's a corpse in the bed, I do. The room described by the organizers as a ladies' room I normally use as a dressing- and bathroom."

McGraw's sleepy eyes moved about.

"Valuable things here. Insured against loss?"

"I am, sir—by Jarretts. Furthermore, they undertake to put a responsible representative in charge. I have never met such a person."

McGraw lay back.

"And, during the time this tragedy was taking place, you were asleep?"

"Yes."

"I see. There's only one more point: you see this piece of jewellery." McGraw indicated the Egyptian pectoral lying before him. "Formalities being over, I speak as a man in need of advice. You are an expert. May I ask your opinion of this exhibit. Please don't touch it."

LARKHALL PIKE, who had begun to adjust his pince-nez, dropped the glasses on their black ribbon.

"Don't *touch* it, sir? How the blazes am I to examine the thing without touching it?"

"Sorry. Thought a sight of it would be enough."

"Pshaw!" Pike fixed his glasses and glanced down. "Late eighteenth Theban. Cloisonné—good, if real. Goldwork first class. If spurious, a clever copy. Identical piece in the Cairo Museum—found by Flinders Petrie." He removed his pince-nez. "Have I the permission of Scotland Yard to retire again to the kitchen?"

When he had gone:

"Awkward old party," said Sample. "You kept your patience better than I could, sir."

"Only way." McGraw chewed thoughtfully. He was surveying the bookshelves.

Suddenly, he asked: "What's the family name of the Marquess of Glengale?"

Sample was startled by the abrupt query.

"Marquess of Glengale? You've beaten me. . . . Oh, I see! You're thinking about the Bentley outside?"

McGraw nodded.

"See if there's a *Debrett* here."

Sample explored several rows of volumes, then pulled one out, banged the cover to dust it, and sneezed.

"Ah! Here it is. . . ." He whistled softly. "Look at this, sir. Ronald Charringford Copley Bruton, eighth marquess of Glengale——"

"Bruton! Let's see. . . . H'm . . . ha . . . eighth marquess . . . h'm . . . *Ah!* 'Married, Agatha Mary Elphinstowe——'"

"Elphinstowe!" Sample echoed.

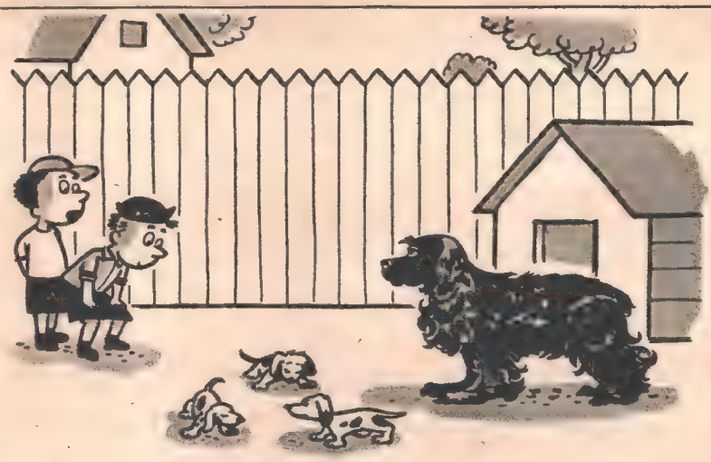
"'No male issue. One daughter. Hilary Felice Mary.'" He stopped. "Hilary Felice Mary Bruton," McGraw repeated thoughtfully. "The daughter of the Marquess of Glengale's a tricky one

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can count on the help of John Bull's team of experts. The range of problems dealt with is extensive—as shown by the appreciative letters received each week.

For instance, Mrs. E. B. of Yorkshire writes: "Thank you so much for getting me my back pension of £12 12s." . . . Mr. L. F. S. of Surrey writes: "Your advice regarding song copyright is invaluable to me" . . . Mr. S. M. of Cheshire writes: "Your prompt reply to my query about mink farming puts me completely in the picture."

Readers' inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1 (stamped, addressed envelope for reply, please).



"I don't know why, but we're mad at the people who own the father"

to touch. We're handling dynamite. . . ."

In the summer house, Storm Kennedy was talking to Hilary.

"You see, Hilary," he said, "how hopelessly I am tied. McGraw's never likely to know that I found your handkerchief lying beside the dead man. But that *is* where I found it. Suppose this horrible thing should go to court, and I am put on oath as a witness? Must I commit perjury? Wouldn't it be wiser, my dear, to explain the mystery to a friend rather than to the police?"

Hilary sat, hands clasped between her knees, looking down at the floor. Through a hole in the roof a ray of sunshine illuminated her fair hair. Kennedy watched her.

"Yes," she whispered. "It would."

She was pale, but her eyes expressed neither fear nor defiance.

"I'll try to help you. . . . Finding my handkerchief," she said in a low even voice, "where you found it, gave you the idea that I must have known the man. It's true. I did know him."

Kennedy didn't speak. He waited. Hilary's fingers holding the cigarette were quite steady.

"Only a few people—very few—were aware of this. If it were found out, if I admitted it, just the thing I was trying to hide would be dragged into the limelight. I thought, stupidly, that silence would save me from that. I had no right to think so. It forced Elfie to lie—to cover my lie. For Elfie knew him, too."

Kennedy was thinking hard. He had a glimpse of the pattern on the loom and visualized shapes yet to come.

"I don't want to interrupt, Hilary," he said. "But I believe it might be wiser if you don't tell me his name—yet. I have stated, truthfully, that I never saw the man before; but McGraw might spring the question in another form."

"All right. I'll do whatever you tell me. I came here to meet him last night—for nothing else but just that. Elfie knew all about it, and came with me. . . . Good heavens!" She jumped. "What's that?"

A voice was heard shouting:

"Miss Bruton wanted! Miss Bruton!"

Hilary sprang up, nervously, upsetting the handbag which lay open beside her. Its contents spilled out on the dirty floor.

"Damn!" said Kennedy. "Quick! We may not have another chance: Where had you come from when you ran into Elfie and me outside that study door?"

"I had just left him. . . ."

"Miss Bruton!"

Kennedy stooped and began to gather up feminine trifles. Hilary forced a smile.

"Thank you. I think that's everything."

A police sergeant appeared at the door.

"This way, if you please, Miss. You're wanted, too, sir. Chief Inspector's orders."

"All right, Sergeant. I'm coming."

Hilary walked out composedly and went ahead with the sergeant. Storm Kennedy was about to follow when a faint gleam of metal attracted his attention. He dropped to one knee, peering under the seat. Something out of Hilary's bag had been overlooked.

He retrieved it—a heavy gold case, resembling a fountain-pen, the top attached by a thin metal chain. Probably lipstick, he surmised.

Kennedy turned and went outside. But Hilary and the sergeant were already mounting ruinous stone steps which led up to part of the terrace. He slipped the gold case into his pocket. . . .

CHIEF INSPECTOR MCGRAW said: "Look at it this way. Whoever took the risk of stealing that thing must have had a big stake in the game. Clear?"

"Quite clear, sir."

Sergeant Sample sat at the desk. McGraw paced about the shadowed room, chewing.

"Right. In taking that chance, he or she must have known the loss would be found out. Therefore he (let's call it *he*) must have guessed the theft would prove something *we* didn't know. What would it prove, Sergeant Sample?"

"It would prove," Sample replied, carefully choosing his words, "that the case wasn't as cold as we thought."

McGraw paused, stared across at him.

"Congratulations. That's so. The only person deep enough to stick his neck out so far would be the murderer. Right?"

"I agree, sir."

"Therefore (the thing we didn't know) the murderer is still in the house!"

"Or was, at that time."

McGraw pulled up again.

"A wise one, Sergeant! Inspector Hawley is responsible for covering all means of exit. But we can't be sure. Next point: in what way did this object nobody could open incriminate the killer? Why take such chances to get it?"

"I give that one up."

"Is that so? You're failing me, Sample. Because I'd given it up, too! When—if ever—we get a fingerprint equipment from Lychgate we may learn something. But I doubt it. Let's believe

Continued on page 27

"All right— so I've changed my mind!"

YOU MUST SPEND HOURS KEEPING YOUR KITCHEN SO BRIGHT!
OH, NO— WITH VIM IT'S DONE IN A JIFFY!
MY! YOU'VE CHANGED — YOU ONCE SAID CLEANERS WERE ALL ALIKE
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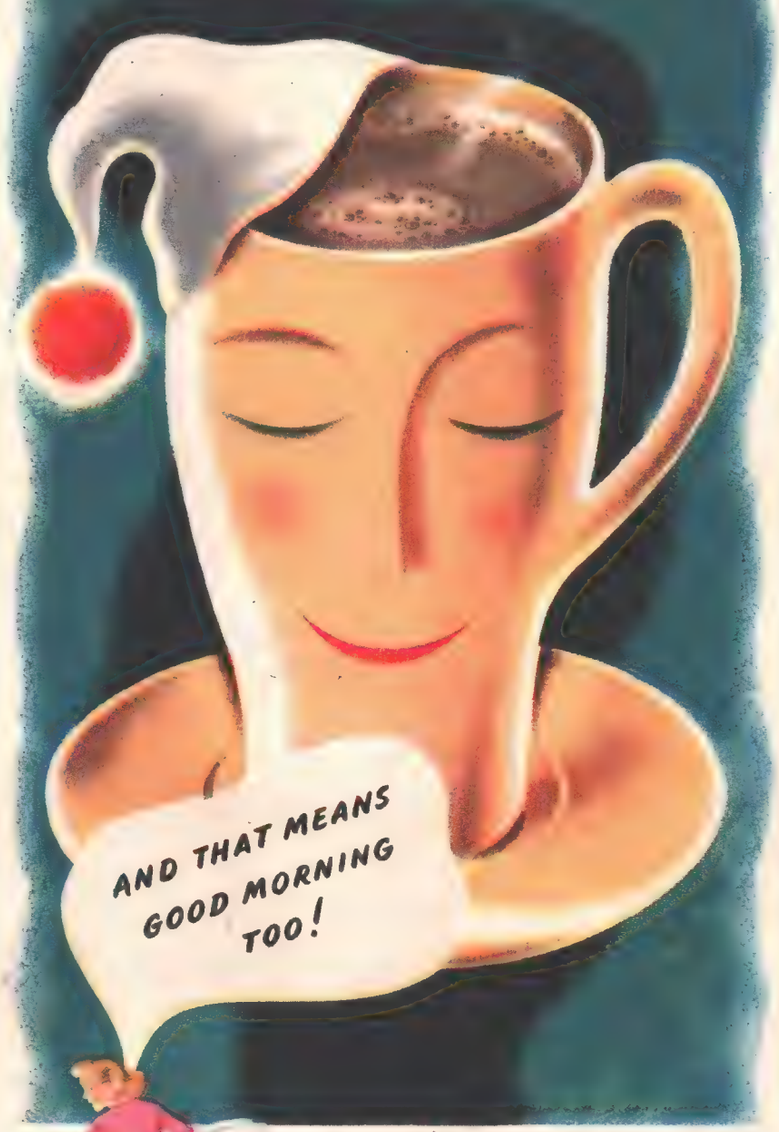

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HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 25

in Inspector Hawley and accept as a fact that nobody unauthorized left these premises since we arrived. What does that leave us with?"

"With what we had before. Except that one of 'em must have done it."

"Correct. Let's try to put a finger on that one." McGraw stood still. "We have following choice: Mr. Larkhall Pike, who is, Hawley tells me, a retired Indian Army officer. Number two, Mohammed Ibn Lahún, a friend of Mrs. Faraway's, who claims he's staying at the Berkley Hotel, London. Checked it?"

"Yes, sir. He has a suite there. Fishy character. He seems to me to know a lot. But the puzzling thing is, he says so!"

"That, I agree, *is* the puzzling thing; but it may be a pose. Next, Mr. Allen Lovelace. Anything on Lovelace?"

"On the desk here, Chief Inspector."

McGRAW took up a small, black bound book, glanced at the name, in gilt, on the binding, and then opened it at the first page. He dropped the book on the desk, and nodded.

"Deal with him later! We come to the Honourable Peter Faraway."

"He knows nothing."

"H'm. . . . Storm Kennedy!"

McGraw resumed his promenade.

"We know all about *him*, sir!"

"Not all, Sample. In the first place, he's damn' clever. Second, he's one of these hand-picked, anvil-wrought characters they used to drop behind the German lines. He doesn't give a damn for anybody. And that means me. If —and I suspect it is so—he's here on a job, he'll stick at nothing!"

"We know that, sir."

"We do! We'll call Mr. Storm Kennedy in for a chat, presently. Let's consider the women, now. Mrs. Muller, wife of an oil engineer, on vacation in England. Staying at Hyde Park Hotel. Checked?"

"Report not come through yet."

"Attractive woman." The chief inspector smiled reminiscently. "Who's next? Miss Sidney, known as Sidonia. Vocalist with Sammy Sam's band. Any impressions?"

"Very nice figure."

"So Mr. Peter Faraway seems to think. Brings us to Miss Amelia Elphinstowe. Hard-boiled as they come."

"You haven't talked to her yet."

"I told you why. She's an aunt of Lady Hilary Bruton—who gave a wrong name."

"If I remember rightly, Mary *is* one of her names."

"Maybe. But she was trying to hide behind it."

There was a rap on the door, and Inspector Hawley looked in.

"The women have been searched. Missing evidence not found. Will it be all right for Wilson to go up and test for fingerprints?"

"Send him along."

Sergeant Sample sat tapping a pencil on his notebook and the Chief Inspector was still walking about when a sandy-haired young constable came in, carrying an attaché case. He peered around the darkened room in evident surprise.

"Hallo, Wilson. Sergeant Sample, show him the window frame. Might try the table, too. You have the key?" Sample nodded. "Then go and ask Mr. Kennedy to step in for a chat."

When, a few minutes later, Storm Kennedy came in, followed by Sample, McGraw had resumed his seat behind the desk.

"Please sit down, Mr. Kennedy. Perhaps you can help me. You told Superintendent Croker that you arrived late last night and could find nobody you knew. While you were looking around, you glanced into this room through the window. Was it lighted as you see it now?"

"No. Only the floor lamp was alight."

"And after the body was discovered?"

"I found it switched off."

"Is that so?" McGraw opened his eyes. "Now, Mr. Kennedy, I want to talk to you about another little matter. Do you think that anyone is concealing anything —a name, for instance? Name of Bruton, for instance?"

"I am quite well aware that she was doing that," Kennedy replied quietly. "Lady Hilary gave her name as Mary Bruton—which *is* her name, by the way —on an impulse which I think you will understand, and I hope condone."

Sergeant Sample blew his nose.

"Thank you, Mr. Kennedy. I knew already, though." McGraw slightly raised the drooping lids. "And you don't feel she was suppressing *another* name?"

"No name known to *me*."

"Quite sure of that, Mr. Kennedy?"

"Quite sure."

McGraw seemed to be thinking. He was silent for a long time. Sample was reading notes.

"Several questions I might ask," McGraw drawled at last. "But they can wait. I might ask, for instance, if you're prepared to lay your cards down. But I should hate you to say No. So we'll leave it. Everybody else here is being searched. A necessary formality. Important evidence has been stolen. Any objection to turning out the contents of your pockets?"

Storm Kennedy stood up.

"None whatever." He grinned cheerfully. "I wish you luck!"

He plunged his hand, first into the inside pocket of his coat, and found the envelope which contained Hilary's stained handkerchief. During that period of close concentration demanded by McGraw's questioning, he had temporarily forgotten that this damning piece of cambric was there.

But he laid the envelope calmly on the desk. It was ignored.

Next, he tumbled out his wallet; then an empty cigarette case, a lighter, a small tubular flashlamp—and his fingers closed around that gold object redeemed from the spillings of Hilary's bag. He placed it beside the other things which he had already laid down. . . .

McGraw rose slowly from his chair. His eyes flicked wide open. Sample bent over his chief's shoulder.

"Mr. Kennedy!"

Storm Kennedy, who had begun to empty his trouser pockets, looked up, and met the fixed regard of two pairs of eyes.

"Yes?"

"I suppose you can explain how this piece of evidence—" McGraw pointed to the gold case—"stolen from my custody, comes to be in your possession?"

SILENCE lay heavy on the room. Storm Kennedy thought rapidly. The murdered man lying on the steps . . . the footprints in the blood; Hilary's handkerchief.

Had he committed himself to the defence of a murderess . . . whom he loved?

If the victim was indeed the man named by Lord Glengale, then Hilary had confessed that she came here to meet him. She had confessed to having just left him when she ran panic-stricken, out of this room.

Now, some vital evidence—by appearance, either a gold fountain-pen or lipstick container—had been stolen from the police. And it had fallen from Hilary's handbag.

There must be an explanation. And he knew he must find it quickly.

Yes—there was *one* explanation!

Hilary, before walking up to the terrace with the police sergeant, had said that whatever had fallen from her bag he had recovered. In short, she had missed nothing. This gold case he had found, later, under the seat.

And, not so long before, Sidonia had been in there adjusting her make-up, a large handbag open beside her.

She, and not Hilary, might have dropped the gold case!

He smiled. "The implication in your words, Chief Inspector, amounts to a charge of accessory after the fact. Shouldn't I be warned?"

"Depends on what you say."

"I'm afraid you'll be disappointed. I picked the thing up in the garden five minutes ago."

"Where?"

"In the summer-house."

"What were you doing there?"

"Smoking."

"Alone?"

"At the time that I saw what I took to be a woman's lipstick lying on the floor—yes."

"But before that?"

"I had been talking to Lady Hilary. The case lay under the seat, and I didn't notice it until she had gone. As a matter of fact," Kennedy proceeded smoothly, "the summer-house has been very popular. I saw Sidonia there this morning, too."

"Talk to her?"

"Yes. She was adjusting her make-up while waiting for her shoes to dry. Been washing off the bloodstains."

Sergeant Sample, busily writing, paused, looked up.

"Did you say adjusting her make-up?"

"Yes."

Sample glanced at McGraw — and Kennedy knew that his red herring, for a moment at any rate, had put the pack off the scent. Sample had instantly jumped to the conclusion (as Kennedy had hoped) that Sidonia, fumbling in her bag, might have dropped the gold case, unnoticed. He didn't believe that she had anything to do with the matter. But if she had, well, it was no part of his business to protect Sidonia.

McGraw had closed his eyes. Now, he partly opened them.

"Ask Constable Wilson to come down."

Sample nodded and called from the

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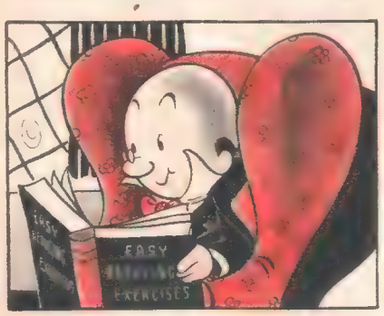
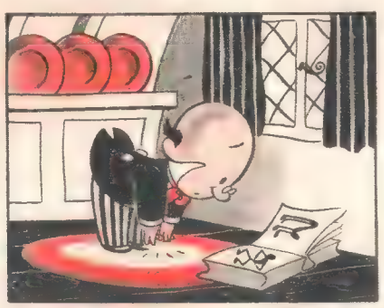
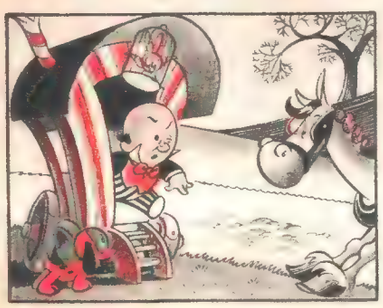
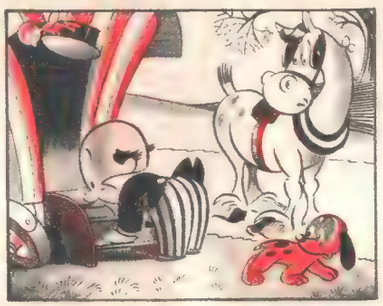
MR. DIMPLE *by David Hand*









foot of the stair. The sandy haired young policeman appeared promptly.

"Look over this pencil-case," McGraw directed. "Do it upstairs. More light."

"Very good, sir."

Wilson picked up the mysterious object with a pair of tweezers, gingerly as though he handled some poisonous reptile.

"Any results from the window frame?"

"Yes, sir. Two sets of fingerprints—quite clear. A man's."

"Is that so? Got your charts of persons present?"

"Yes, sir. From Inspector Hawley. But none of the prints taken corresponds."

McGRAW stood up slowly. Then, he sat down again, and smiled a wry smile. He glanced over his shoulder at Sample.

"Yours and mine! I opened the window. You closed it! Go up and check in a minute. Nothing else, constable?"

"Nothing clear, sir. Just some smudges."

"*Over* the other prints?"

"In one case, yes."

"No lines discernible?"

"Not a thing, sir. Just smudges."

"Key?"

"One clear thumbprint."

"Mine," intoned Sample, as though the word had been a response in a church service.

McGraw chewed silently.

"Get on with that pencil-case."

This interlude had given Storm Kennedy time for further reflection. If, in addition to his own, Hilary's fingerprints were found on the gold case, only one conclusion remained possible. . . .

Inspector Hawley rapped on the study door and came in.

He said, sombrely: "I'm afraid Dr. Smithy isn't available. He's been called to a consultation in London."

"Is that so," came McGraw's tired voice. "Doesn't help a lot. Better send for the ambulance, and get a hospital opinion on the real cause of death."

"I'll see to it immediately. Another point. This line is in service again, if you want to use it. I've spoken to the exchange."

"Good."

"The people outside are getting restive, Chief Inspector. So long as they don't attempt to leave, is there any objection to letting them out in the garden?"

"None on my part. Found what I was looking for."

When Inspector Hawley had gone, McGraw stood up, walked around the desk and leaned back against it, watching Storm Kennedy through half-closed eyes.

"You're not compelled to answer any question I ask, Mr. Kennedy. But it might be better if you did. Are you covering someone?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. Want me to ask you who it is?"

"No."

"I won't—now. But I can guess. Is your story about picking up that thing absolutely true?"

"Absolutely true."

"You weren't *looking* for it?"

"I didn't know of its existence. I don't know, now, what it is or why it has any bearing on the case. I was going to show it to the women, as I supposed one of them had dropped it."

"I'll take your word for that. *I* don't know what it is, or why it bears on the case. But it was found on the dead man. Lay upstairs beside his body. Someone got into that room this morning and removed it. Clear?"

It was so clear that it was startling. For it explained the mystery of the woman who crept about in the night; the woman of whom he, himself, had caught a glimpse; whom Larkhall Pike had detected trying to steal upstairs to the room where the dead man lay. . . . She had been after this mysterious object!

"What does it contain?"

McGraw's sleepy eyes never flickered.

"Couldn't say."

"Why not open it?"

"Have *you* tried?"

"Never occurred to me to do so. I simply assumed it to be an unusually large lipstick."

"Is that so? Well, quite briefly, nobody has been able to open it. Some sort of trick fastener." McGraw was silent for a moment. "Anything you think you ought to tell me?"

Kennedy's glance played over the envelope which lay on the desk behind McGraw, the envelope which contained a bloodstained handkerchief; then:

"Yes," he said quietly. "There is. Whoever got into this room this morning attempted to do so earlier—during the night. Now that I know the facts, I realize the importance of something that happened."

Briefly, Kennedy related how he had

been awakened by a creaking door, and had seen a figure stealing out of the study. He was fully alive to McGraw's tactics. By offering certain fragments of information himself, he hoped to gain more than he gave. Of Pike's evidence, however, which identified the prowler as female, Kennedy said nothing. But Sample put the question:

"Was it a man or a woman you saw, sir?"

He asked in a tone which suggested that he couldn't have cared less if it had been a purple elephant.

"Impossible to say," Kennedy replied. "Could have been either. I thought no more about it at the time, as the explanation might well be a perfectly simple one."

"Are you sure," McGraw asked, "that whoever it was came out of Mr. Pike's study—this room?"

"Quite sure."

"We'd better have another chat with Mr. Pike."

CONSTABLE WILSON came downstairs.

"The gold case is all over fingerprints, sir," he reported. "Mostly illegible. There's just a single thumb mark—recent—which I've identified with one of the charts. The name on the chart is W. Storm Kennedy."

McGraw glanced at Kennedy.

"Seems to confirm your story!" he said dryly. "Nothing else, Constable Wilson?"

"Well, sir—" Wilson's sandy eyebrows registered puzzlement—"there is one peculiar thing—if you wouldn't mind examining the fingerprints through a lens."

"Can do." McGraw considered Storm Kennedy under drooping lids. "Go and have a talk with Larkhall Pike. You may be able to handle him better than I can. . . ."

When Kennedy found himself out in the long corridor and Sample had closed the door behind him, he stood still for a moment, weighing up gains and losses.

In recovering his property from the desk he had resisted a strong temptation to snatch the envelope containing Hilary's handkerchief, and had left it lying there until the last moment, as if all but forgotten. His heart was still ticking above normal from the ordeal.

McGraw's purpose in asking him to talk to Larkhall Pike was plain enough. McGraw hoped to find out, in the event of Pike's evidence pointing in a certain direction, if he would try to obscure it.

How much did McGraw know?

Whatever he knew, he clearly suspected that somebody in the house had suppressed knowledge of the dead man's identity. It was reasonable also to assume that the person he suspected was the person in whom Kennedy was interested; a safe bet that he guessed this person to be Hilary.

And, damn it! The man was right!

McGraw was playing a waiting game, because a mistake in dealing with Lord Glengale's daughter might have serious consequences.

What was there in her statement to Superintendent Croker which had betrayed her? Or did McGraw's doubts concerning Hilary rest on no foundation other than her having given a misleading name?

His first job must be to find Pike (whom McGraw undoubtedly would interview later) and induce him to be silent concerning their early morning conversation in the kitchen. McGraw must not learn that he (Kennedy) had known the midnight prowler to be a woman all along.

He made his way out into the air. The effect, coming from the draped study, was similar to that of leaving a cinema in daylight. Sunshine drenched the garden. Storm Kennedy looked down the slope.

Two figures moved slowly in the distance, away beyond the pond. He identified Miss Elphinstowe and Hilary. Three sides of the property were bounded by highways, that facing north by a narrow, unpaved and weed-grown lane which joined a secondary road near the back gate, where a constable stood on duty.

A car was being driven along this lane, cautiously, as the bad surface demanded. Kennedy could hear but could not see it.

There was no one in the panelled hall.

He went into the courtyard. Several cars were visible beyond locked iron entrance gates, and he saw a pair of constables on duty outside. Mohammed stood there, placidly regarding a group of men who argued hotly with the police.

"What's going on, Mr. Ibn Lahûn?"

The calm, dark eyes were turned in his direction.

"Reporters, sir, I believe. Chief Inspector McGraw has given orders that none is to be admitted. But reporters, like locusts, are hard to deny. I have been photographed several times through the bars, already."

And, even as he spoke, cameras were raised—and Storm Kennedy knew that his picture, also, would be in the evening papers.

He moved on, turning left, beyond range of the cameras, and following a path which he thought would lead him to those rambling domestic quarters in which he hoped to find Larkhall Pike.

Luck was with him, for just as he was about to enter that walled enclosure which embraced the kitchens, Larkhall Pike came out. He wore a raincoat over his pyjamas, and a plaid cap. He was carrying a wicker basket.

"Hallo, sir!"

Pike paused, glared; and then the lined face relaxed.

"I am going to look for eggs. I hope to obtain permission from Scotland Yard to boil two for my breakfast."

Storm Kennedy fell into step beside him.

"Mind if I come along?"

"Not at all. If you can tolerate boiled eggs, you might care to breakfast with me."

"That's really kind of you, sir. But I doubt if the police will give me time."

"Badgering *you*, now, are they?"

"They are! McGraw has been asking questions about some woman who was prowling about in the night. I didn't repeat what you had told me although I had some vague impression of the kind, myself. But I suspect that he may call upon you to say if anything disturbed you. If he does, there's probably no need to mention our earlier conversation."

"I shall not mention it, Mr. Kennedy. I respect information imparted in confidence. But this damned policeman might misconstrue your motives."

STORM KENNEDY experienced a pang of conscience. He was beginning to feel something oddly akin to friendship for this impoverished, bitter old soldier, and he hated being forced to play the hypocrite.

"He misconstrues them already!" he said hastily. "In fact, he asked me to see you and to try to find out if you could confirm the report in any way."

"Inform him that I declined to be cross-examined."

"As you wish." Storm Kennedy smiled. "I think I know how you feel."

They had come to a point where a road indented with ancient cart ruts, led from a boarded-up gateway westward across the grounds. Directly ahead rose a steep hill, densely wooded, and, away to the left, Kennedy saw a number of chicken coops. A man carrying a bucket moved about among them. He could hear the clank of the handle whenever the man put the bucket down.

He turned, looking back, and then:

"Hangover House must be very old?" he said, meditatively.

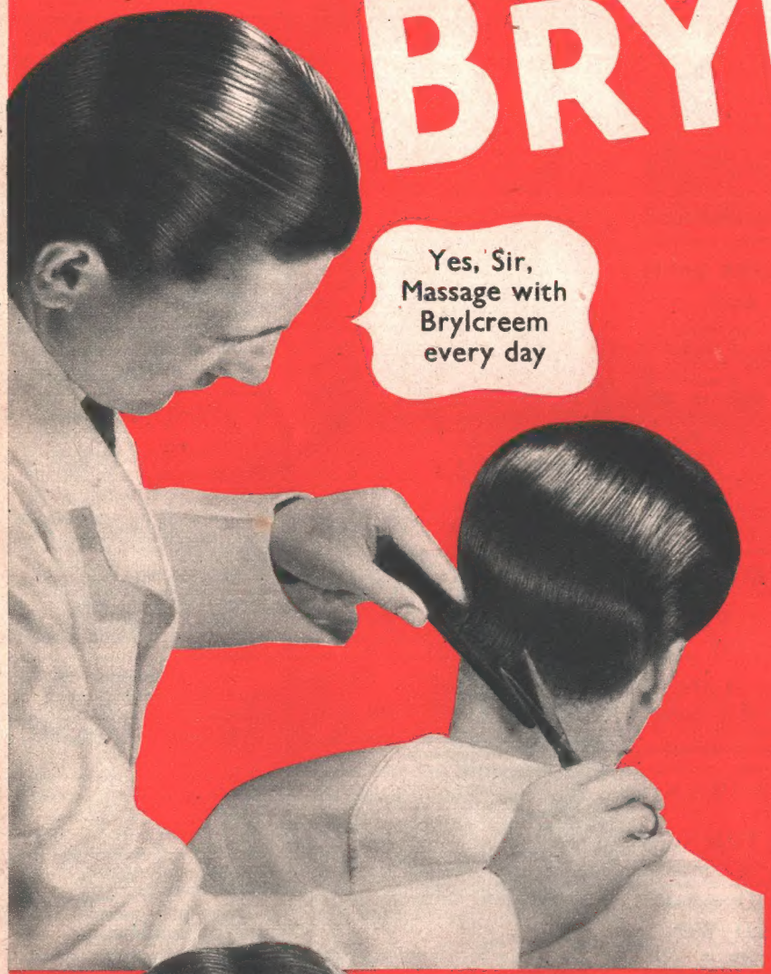
Larkhall Pike pointed.

"D'Angauverre Abbey stood on that hillside—a mile or so from the Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury. It was closed, and then demolished, in Tudor times. This place was the abbot's guest house. It later became the property of an

Continued on page 30

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR—

BRYLCREEM YOUR HAIR



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The Peace Pudding
In The East
Promises
To Ease The Tension
Around The Yule-log
Every Second
Love Finds A Way, So
Angelic Voices
Louder And Louder
For A Shilling
Dad's Cigar
In His Old Age
Wants Watching

Mincemeat
Tampered With
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SECOND PRIZE, £50 plus Christmas Turkey: J. E. Hurley, The Flat, Fore Street, Williton, Taunton: STRAINING AT THE LEASH—TEMPER? WALK IT AROUND!

THIRD PRIZE, £25 plus Christmas Turkey: F. Warr, 35 Heathville Road, Crouch Hill, N.19: THE BEAUTY OF IT—RETURNS *Prettier* "PACKET," EXPORTER!

OTHER AWARDS: £20: R. G. Patterson, "Mine Cottage," Wern, Rhosesmor, Mold: BANGING THE DRUM—FOR UNO, TINY FISTS. £15: Mrs. F. J. Foyle, 2 Bell Street, Romsey: OUR VILLAGE BUS—CARRYING CHILDREN TO—*University*? £10: P. J. Mace, 127 Boundary Road, Chatham: HELPING BRITAIN—TO WIN, "PAPER TIPS"? £9: D. Tebbutt, 106 Cae Gwilym Lane, Cefn, Wrexham: RAINY DAY—*I* SAVED FOR—*Cloudburst*! £8: C. H. Carter, 19 Norton Avenue, Gabalfa, Cardiff: RAINY DAY—AND *Any* GOVERNMENT'S "MUD." £7: C. F. Church, 25 Chajn Dwieli Road, Cospicua, Malta: HELPING BRITAIN—THE OLD-FASHIONED GROUSING *Non-striker*! £6: F. Garland, 176 Clayhall Avenue, Ilford: HELPING BRITAIN—PRODUCE "RAFT," "AXE." Above 7 winners each also receives Christmas Turkey.

For 5 winners of £5 plus Turkey, and 5 of £2 10s. plus Turkey, see last week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

Winners of 20 further Turkeys and 100 Fowls have been notified and 3,000 "Good Shots" posted.

XMAS FOWLS and PUDDINGS for XWORDS

£100 1st PRIZE CASH plus

XMAS FOWL and PUDDING

for £100 Winner or each sharer

Awards value £25 amongst 1st Runners-up

AND UP TO

100 XMAS FOWLS
and
100 XMAS PUDDINGS

(Fowl and Pudding with every 1st Runners-up Award value 5s. or over.)

"Signpost" Prizes for 2nd Runners-up.

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 660

1. Business man who finds himself at station without it will probably be in fix
3. Many a married man has found his mother-in-law difficult to
5. Long one won't help invalid to get any better
7. Rancour occasionally shows itself when this is being written about
8. You don't expect small shopkeeper to have big one
12. Entry which requires special consideration
13. One sometimes proves very damaging

Down Clues

1. An epidemic of political ones is an unhealthy sign in a state
2. Actors are prone to talk about this
4. Operatic stars sometimes quarrel about their
6. Ice is seen in form of this
9. Many a man becomes embittered after going through
10. Modest, shy folk take a lot of coaxing to move to this
11. If it gets too damp it may become mouldy
12. Should be taught not to go off with your slippers

LAST 2 WEEKS to WIN a DOUBLE XMAS PRIZE

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps, covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated December 10.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

1C	A	2S			3B		A	R	4D
R	I	H		E	E		P	A	U
I	R	O	N	Y		5	A	C	E
				O	S		C		
E	6W		7S	T	A		E		
8S	A		E		G			9	
				S	A	10F	A	11R	I
12D	E	B		T				O	L
O	R	E		O		R	O	O	L
	660		13	A	L	E			

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(*Total fee shown includes entry on Square*)

I enclose P.O. value.....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

660 Closing Postmark MON., Nov. 28

HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 28

ancestor, Sir Peregrine Pike, who rebuilt it as a manor house."

"Your roots are here, sir."

"True, Mr. Kennedy. But the tree withers. The present name, a vulgarized form of d'Angauverre, first appears in local records in 1742. Yes, Hangover House is very old, very sad and decrepit. It is appropriate that I shall probably be the last of my line to inhabit it. . . ."

A few hundred yards away, Sidonia came out of the ladies' room and walked down the steps that led to the lily pond, carrying her sable wrap over one shoulder. On the last step she paused.

Mrs. Muller and the blond Lovelace sat together on a stone seat which overlooked the pond.

"Hallo," she hailed, tonelessly.

"It is wonderful to be let out of jail again," said Mrs. Muller. "Don't you think so?"

"Everything's wonderful. I could cry like a child. Must go walk it off."

And Sidonia went swaying away down a sloping, weed-choked path until she became lost to view amid overgrown shrubbery.

She discovered a path, bramble-haunted and dark, which ran close to an ancient wall, along the north side.

SIDONIA, behind a façade of bored tolerance, concealed a hatred of Hangover House and everyone in it. Moreover, she had urgent, vitally urgent, reasons for leaving without delay. It was a case of now or never; and Sidonia was not lacking in audacity.

She knew that there was a policeman posted at the back gate, for she had seen him. She knew, also, that the narrow lane outside the wall led to a road on which this gate opened. But it came out some distance away to the north.

The perils of the path no longer concerned Sidonia. Her shoes, her stockings, her frock, all were ruined. Her hair had never recovered from the cold water treatment.

Narrower and yet darker the path became. No sunlight could ever penetrate through the dense foliage which roofed it in. Nettles were abundant.

Then, Sidonia stopped. She stood quite still.

"*Sidonia!*"

It was a chilling whisper.

Here, a little more light broke the darkness of the way. Close to her feet she saw mossy blocks, and, looking to the right, and beyond, could make out a gap in the wall, high up near its crest. Something seemed to stir, shadowy.

"*Sidonia!*"

She stared upward, intent, poised.

A face peered down at her from the jagged opening. . . .

To be continued next week

"Walters' Palm" REGD.
TOFFEE
THE PERFECTION of CONFECTIONS
JB

Such a Longer-Lasting Lather!
INO FLAKES
Wash Everything...
INO FLAKES
JB
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"Give me a soapless powder for the whole wash! Lots of lather, no scum, and my wash looks brighter!" A host of American housewives agree. They buy soapless powders every week, in spite of no soap rationing!

Mrs. Johns, of WILTON, England says:

"I wanted a soapless powder that would tackle the big wash. I was thrilled with Wisk!" So are women everywhere. Thanks to Wisk, they need no longer worry about finding enough soap coupons for the big family wash.

"What we like is a soapless powder for the WHOLE WASH"

WHEREVER housewives have been offered a soapless powder that does the *whole family wash*—safely, too, without harm to clothes or hands—they have welcomed it with open arms.

Already, in America, *where there is no soap rationing at all*, over one-quarter of the clothes-washing products bought every week are soapless!

In England, too, there is a soapless powder that does the whole wash—Wisk.

Wisk is not only safe for all your fine things and coloureds. Above all, Wisk does all the heavy, dirty things that use up most of the family's precious soap ration every week.

You'll be amazed at the wonderful lather you get with Wisk. And the more you whip Wisk up, the more lather you get. What's more, Wisk forms no hard-water scum.

You use Wisk just as you would a soap powder. (But don't mix Wisk with soap, soap powder, or soap flakes; soap and Wisk don't work well together.) Ask your shopkeeper for Wisk. No coupons needed. Obtainable in England and Wales.

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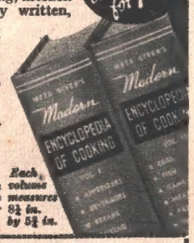

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V262

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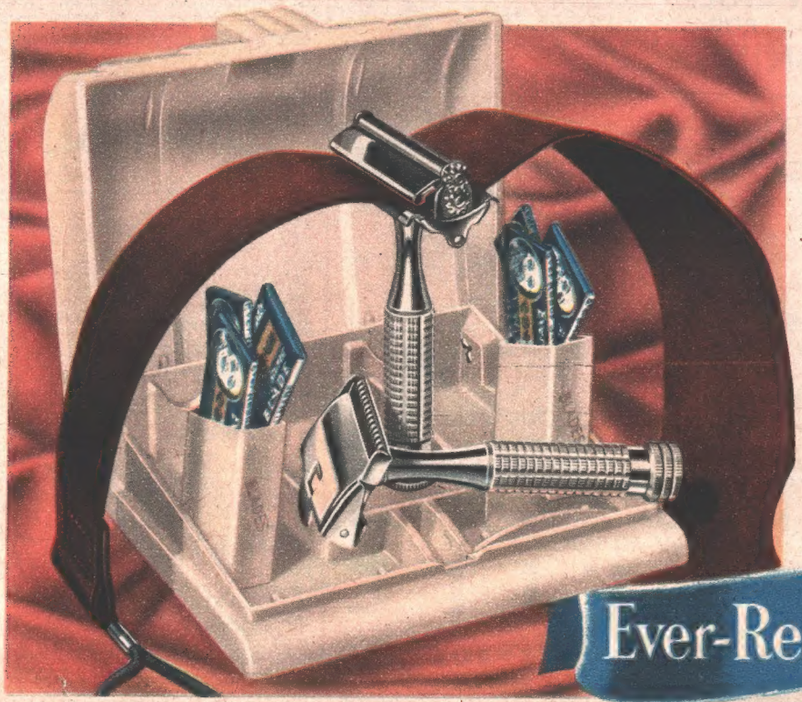

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